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THE
Theological and Miscellaneous
WORKS
OF
JOSEPH PRIESTLEY, LL.D. F.R.S. &c.
WITH
NOTES, BY THE EDITOR.

VOLUME XVII.

Containing

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INCREASE OF INFIDELITY:
LETTERS TO M. VOLNEY:

A Comparison of the Institutions of Moses

WITH THOSE OF THE

HINDOOS AND OTHER ANCIENT NATIONS;

WITH

REMARKS ON M. DUPUIS'S ORIGIN OF ALL RELIGIONS,

AND ON THE

Allegorizing Talents of M. Boullanger:

AND THE

DOCTRINES OF HEATHEN PHILOSOPHY COMPARED

WITH THOSE OF REVELATION.

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P R E F A C E

BY THE

EDITOR.

THE Sixteenth Volume having comprised the Discourses delivered in Philadelphia, which were principally designed to illustrate the Evidences of Divine Revelation, I have here brought together Dr. Priestley's latest labours in that great cause, to the promotion of which the efforts of his youth, his manhood, and his declining age were equally devoted.

To the enlarged edition of the "Observations on the Increase of Infidelity" are now annexed the originals from Voltaire's Correspondence and the Ruins of Volney. This attention I considered as due to my Author, lest any reader should regard such extravagances as not always the language of those learned *Unbelievers*, but occasionally the misrepresentation of their sentiments in an inaccurate translation. I have also largely quoted, as probably little known in England, the Letter from M. Volney to Dr. Priestley, which called forth his *Letters* to that learned and scientific traveller.

The "Comparison of the Institutions of Moses with those of the Hindoos and other Ancient Nations," which appeared in 1799, was the execution of a design expressed by the Author two years before, in the Preface to the Second Volume of Discourses, preached at Philadelphia, (Vol. XVI. p. 189.) His earlier attention to this subject appears in the Appendix to this Volume, No. IV., and in the former volumes to which I have referred (p. 132).

I cannot allow myself to send the *Comparison* from the press, without apologizing, in behalf of the Author, for some expressions, descriptive of *Hindoo* manners and customs, which it will be found to contain, especially from

the Institutes of Menu. Sir William Jones, whose translation is uniformly followed, and to whom alone we are indebted for an acquaintance with that work, had, probably, such descriptions in his recollection when, with "many beauties" which he discovered in those *Institutes*, he contrasted "many blemishes which cannot be justified or palliated," as appears in his preface.

In the present instance to quote such descriptions, however indelicate and offensive, became necessary to the completion of my Author's design. It is well-known to have long been the method of too many Unbelievers in the Mosaic and Christian Revelations, to disparage the practical tendency, and thus to invalidate the authority of both, by exaggerated and highly-flattering descriptions of the religions established, for numerous ages, in the East, as if they were better calculated than the Mosaic or the Christian, to produce an exalted devotion, manners the most gentle, and the purest morals. To counteract the tendency of such misrepresentations was the express purpose of the *Comparison*; a purpose which no general and less explicit statements would have been sufficient to effect. The opinions of *Dupuis* and *Boullanger*, annexed to the *Comparison*, are so extraordinary, that I deemed it desirable, as in the cases of Voltaire and Volney, to justify my Author's representations by quoting the originals.

"The Doctrines of Heathen Philosophy compared with those of Revelation," concluded Dr. Priestley's literary labours in America; and, indeed, that work was written as with a dying hand. I shall now revert to his publications while he resided in England, and purpose, in the next volume, to collect his Tracts in Defence of Unitarianism.

J. T. RUTT.

Clapton, August 24, 1820.

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Observations
ON THE
INCREASE OF INFIDELITY.

THE THIRD EDITION.

To which are added,
ANIMADVERSIONS

ON THE
Writings of several Modern Unbelievers,
AND ESPECIALLY
THE RUINS OF M. VOLNEY.

L'Esprit peu pénétrant se tient volontiers à la surface des choses. Il n'aime pas à les creuser, parce qu'il redoute le travail et la peine. Quelquefois il redoute plus encore la vérité.
BONNET.

[Philadelphia, 1797.]

P R E F A C E.

THESE observations on the causes of the great progress which infidelity has lately made, and is still making, and which were originally prefixed to the *American* edition of my "Letters to the Philosophers and Politicians of France," [1793,] I have here much enlarged, and printed separately. Indeed, they are more proper for the perusal of *Christians* than of *Unbelievers*; being more immediately calculated to give them satisfaction with respect to a prospect which must continually present itself to their minds, and which cannot but at first view appear a very melancholy one. I shall think myself happy, if I be able, in this work, to address myself to believers, or, in my other writings, to unbelievers, with propriety and effect.

If I be asked why I write so much as I do, on the subject of *the Evidences of Christianity*, (for many of my publications relate to it,) I answer, that both its infinite importance and the extraordinary crisis of the times call for it, from every person who conceives that he has any prospect of being heard and attended to. There is no subject whatever with respect to which I am more fully satisfied myself; and few persons, I imagine, will pretend that they have given so much attention to it as I have done. It does not, however, follow from this circumstance, that I have viewed it in every possible light, and that others may not discover what I have overlooked. I have therefore wished to promote the most free and open discussion of it, and have not failed to invite, nay, to provoke, this examination, on every proper occasion.

When, however, we have done all that we can, we must leave the event to a wise Providence, whose instruments we are, and which has, no doubt, the best ends to answer both by the promulgation of Christianity, and the present remarkable progress of infidelity. And believing this, we should not, after doing what we conceive to be our duty, make ourselves unhappy; though influenced, as we necessarily are, by the objects that are nearest to us, it must give pain to every zealous Christian to see so many persons, for whose intellectual and moral improvement he is concerned, and especially his near friends and relations, carried away by the torrent, which he sees to sweep before it every principle

that he feels to be most valuable and useful to himself; leaving them mere worldly-minded beings, instead of heavenly-minded, bounding their prospects by the grave, when his own most pleasing prospects are beyond it.

When I read the Scriptures, in which I have increasing satisfaction as I advance in life, the animating accounts which there abound, of the perfections and providence of God, extending to all the affairs of individual men, as well as those of states and kingdoms, and especially the glorious prospects that are there given us of the future state of things in the world, with respect to the great events which seem now to be approaching, and the light that is thrown over the state beyond the grave, so encouraging to every virtuous endeavour, I cannot help wishing that all persons might partake with me in them, and I feel the most sensible concern for those who cannot do it. *Unbelievers* cannot have the solid consolation that *Christians* have, under all the troubles of life, especially those that are endured for the sake of a good conscience, arising from the persuasion that *all things are working together for their good*, if not here, yet assuredly hereafter. Least of all can the Unbeliever, at the approach of death, sing the triumphant song of the Christian, *O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?**

A zealous Christian may also be allowed to lament his own situation, when destitute of Christian society, having none to converse with on subjects infinitely more interesting to him than any others. And it is the communication of similar sentiments that constitutes the principal charm of society. This we find with respect to all subjects in which men feel any interest; and on this account persons of similar principles, in *politics, philosophy, &c.*, choose to resort together, forming clubs, and various modes of associating, for that purpose. No man can long enjoy a state of warfare in arms or opinions, and least of all in advancing years. Then, at least, we naturally wish to be at our ease, and both to speak and to hear what we know will give pleasure. Unbelievers also feel themselves most at their ease in the society of persons like themselves, when they can revile Christianity, and ridicule the Scriptures, without contradiction, or any fear of giving offence.

Besides, the knowledge we have of human nature and human life, may justly lead us to suspect the want of similar society to confirm our principles. The influence of the

* The four succeeding paragraphs were added to this *third* edition.

company we keep is great, though, by operating gradually, it is often unperceived at the time. In consequence of this, however, the best principles may be undermined, and the worst infused, before we are aware. Good men cannot themselves tell how much they owe to one another in this respect. Where external influence operates powerfully against any set of principles, great and voluntary exertions (of the necessity of which many persons will not be sufficiently aware) must be used to keep them up.

I wish it were possible for me to convey to my philosophical unbelieving friends, the feeling I have of the value of Christianity, a value which is enhanced by the experience of a pretty long and various life, in which Christian principles have been of the most substantial use to me, both in prosperity and in adversity; and as they have supported me through life, they will, I doubt not, afford consolation in the hour of death. But it is not in the power of language to express all that I feel on this subject. Such complex feelings as I wish to communicate, have been formed by associations that have been accumulating in a long series of events and reflections; in reading, thinking, and conversation, &c.; so that a man must have lived in a great measure as I have lived, and consequently have felt what I have felt, before he can be impressed as I am, with the language appropriated to religion, and especially the language of the Scriptures. What impresses me with the deepest reverence, would be heard by many with indifference or contempt.

My reader may make an experiment, as it were, on his own feelings, by attending to the prayer of *Jesus*, in the seventeenth chapter of *John's* Gospel, and the language of *Paul*, in those epistles which he wrote from *Rome* a short time before his death.

But animating and encouraging as their language is, to those who, like *Jesus* and *Paul*, have in some measure devoted their lives, and employed their best talents, to the same great purposes, it cannot be felt, and will be but imperfectly conceived, by others. Some persons, however, who have not taken their place in *the seat of the scorner*, if their early education has not been very unfavourable, and especially, if they have been so happy as to have met with disappointments in life, may conceive that there is something enviable in the state of mind in which their language could be adopted.

As the language of Scripture will be uncouth to most *unbelievers*, who are little acquainted with it, I shall, for

the sake of my philosophical friends, who cannot but approve and admire Hartley's *Theory of the Mind*, but who content themselves with studying his first volume, quote two passages from his second, the beginning and the close of it; hoping that, if they be not wholly destitute of serious impressions, prejudiced as they may be, against religion, they will perceive something great and truly valuable in the feelings of a man who could write as he does.

“Whatever be our doubts, fears, or anxieties, whether selfish or social, whether for time or eternity, our only hope and refuge must be in the infinite power, knowledge, and goodness of God. And if these be really our hope and refuge, if we have a true practical sense and conviction of God's infinite ability and readiness to protect and bless us, an entire, peaceful, happy resignation will be the result, notwithstanding the clouds and perplexities wherewith we may sometimes be encompassed. He who has brought us into this state will conduct us through it: he knows all our wants and distresses: his infinite nature will bear down all opposition from our impotence, ignorance, vice, or misery: he is our Creator, Judge, and King; our Friend, and Father, and God.

“And though the transcendent greatness and gloriousness of this prospect may, at first view, make our faith stagger, and incline us to disbelieve through joy; yet, upon farther consideration, it seems rather to confirm and establish itself on that account; for the more it exceeds our gratitude and comprehension, the more does it coincide with the idea of that absolutely perfect Being, whom the several orders of imperfect beings perpetually suggest to us, as our only resting-place, the cause of causes, and the supreme reality.”*

He concludes his great work as follows: “I have now gone through with my observations on the frame, duty, and expectations of *Man*; finishing them with the doctrine of ultimate unlimited happiness to all. This doctrine, if it be true, ought at once to dispel all gloominess, anxiety and sorrow from our hearts; and raise them to the highest pitch of love, adoration, and gratitude, towards God, our most bountiful Creator and merciful Father, and the inexhaustible source of happiness and perfection. Here self-interest, benevolence, and piety, all concur to move and exalt our affections. How happy in himself, how benevolent to others, and how thankful to God, ought that man to be, who

* *Observations on Man*, Pt. ii. (Introd.) II. pp. 1, 11.

believes both himself and others born to an infinite expectation ! Since God has bid us rejoice, what can make us sorrowful ? Since he has created us for happiness, what misery can we fear ? If we be really intended for ultimate unlimited happiness, it is no matter to a truly resigned person when, or where, or how. Nay, could any of us fully conceive, and be duly influenced by this glorious expectation, this infinite balance in our favour, it would be sufficient to deprive all present evils of their sting and bitterness. It would be a sufficient answer—to all our difficulties and anxieties from the folly, vice, and misery, which we experience in ourselves, and see in others, to say, that they will end in unbounded knowledge, virtue, and happiness ; and that the progress of every individual, in his passage through an eternal life, is from imperfect to perfect, particular to general, less to greater, finite to infinite, and from the creature to the Creator.”*

It must certainly be something truly excellent that could dictate such sentiments as these. If it be a delusion, it is sublime and elevating. But those who are acquainted with the writer's *Theory of the Mind*, will be sensible that the sentiments are as agreeable to true philosophy, as they are to religion, though nothing but religion could have suggested them.

What is most to be apprehended is, that many persons have conceived so fixed an aversion to every thing that bears the name of religion, most interesting as, in its own nature, it must necessarily be, that they will not read, or give the least attention to any thing relating to it. To address such persons on the subject, is, of course, altogether in vain. But there are others, and I hope not a few, who will think it worth their while to inquire whether there be an hereafter for them, or not ; whether they shall survive the grave, or not ; and who may conceive that the question is not a matter of indifference to them, with respect to the conduct or the happiness of their lives here. Among such persons I may hope to find some readers.

Great as is the increase of infidelity in the present age, and even, as I am informed, in this country, I cannot help flattering myself that it will not be so extensive here as on the continent of *Europe* ; because a great cause of its increase in those countries is the establishment of a very corrupt

* *Observations on Man*, Pt. ii. (Introd.) II. pp. 438, 439. See Vol. XVI. p. 489.

system of Christianity in them. Absurdity, supported by power, will never be able to stand its ground against the efforts of reason. What is manifestly contrary to natural reason, *cannot* be received by it; and the bulk of mankind will not take the pains to distinguish between the different parts of a system that are equally forced upon them. Filled with indignation, they will reject the whole.

But happily, in this country, the *church* has no alliance with the *state*, every person being allowed to worship God in whatever manner he pleases, or not to worship him at all, if he be not so disposed, without being liable to any civil inconvenience.* In these circumstances, truth has the best chance of being heard, and of recommending itself; and nothing is wanting to the universal reception of pure Christianity, but a candid attention to it, if, as I doubt not, it be founded in truth. Absurd doctrines being held by the majority of a people will, indeed, disgust many intelligent persons. But the liberty of preaching and publishing being uncontrouled, it will in time appear that Christianity is not answerable for those absurdities. Its real nature will sooner or later be understood, and its evidences will be attended to, and this is all that its most zealous friends can desire. From reasonable men, truth requires nothing but a patient and candid hearing.

In this respect, the last age had the advantage of the present. At the time of the *reformation* from Popery, and for more than a century afterwards, the subject of religion obtruded itself upon all ranks of men, the Scriptures were read with avidity, and the contents of them were the subjects of general conversation;† and with such writings all who could read, thought it necessary to be acquainted. In these circumstances there were few *unbelievers*; and whenever the time shall come, that the Scriptures shall be much and seriously read, it is, I will venture to say, impossible there should be many. The internal evidences of their divine authority are so numerous and so striking, that it is hardly possible but that men's minds must perceive and be impressed by them. The history of the miracles of *Moses*

* See Vol. IX. p. 5; Vol. X. p. 523. Yet in "the *New-England States*" it appears that "every person is obliged to contribute to the maintenance of religion," though "the amount of his tax is given to the minister of his own choice." *Ibid.* p. 520. This *obligation* is surely a *civil inconvenience*. See a more equitable enactment, in *Virginia*, Vol. IX. p. 6, *Note*.

† They were also frequently quoted by *lawyers* and *politicians*; as appears from the *State Trials* and *Parliamentary History*, during that period.

and of *Jesus*, are delivered with such simplicity, that, even without taking into consideration the effects they produced at the time, they strike with the force of truth.

I shall think myself happy, if, by means of writing, preaching, or conversation, I can in any degree draw this requisite degree of attention to the Scriptures, and the evidences of Christianity; or prepare the way for it, by exposing those monstrous corruptions and abuses of the Christian religion, which contribute so much to prejudice the minds of sensible men against it, and indispose them to attend to any thing relating to it.*

The large additions that I have made to this edition of this pamphlet, have been occasioned by the perusal of the *Letters of Voltaire*, in the last edition of his works, and also of M. *Volney's Ruins*, to which I have been led to give more attention than I had done before, in consequence of its being hinted to me, that I might have misrepresented *his* sentiments, as, through inadvertence, in the *Preface* to my "Discourses relating to the Evidences of Revelation,"† I did those of M. *Laquinio*, by joining their names together, when I observed that M. *Volney* denied the existence of Jesus Christ, though in other publications I had given a just account of the sentiments of them both. As M. *Volney* is now in this country, and a copy of this pamphlet will be sent to him, it will be in his power to notice any mistake that he shall think I may have made with respect to his opinions, and the public which hopes to be instructed, to be led into truth and not into error by him, will naturally expect it of him.‡

Some of my Christian friends, who, for want of leisure and other reasons, do not give themselves the trouble to read the writings of *unbelievers*, but who will give me credit for selecting what I think the most specious in them, will wonder that I have found nothing that has more the appearance of solidity in them. I can, however, assure them that, after perusing with some care all that the present age has produced of the kind, at least all that I have heard much boasted of, as *Bon Sens*,§ and the writings of *Boulanger*,||

* Here concluded the *Preface* to the *Second Edition*, printed at *Northumberland*, and reprinted in *London*, 1796.

† See Vol. XVI. p. 8.

‡ This produced "Volney's Answer to Dr. Priestley," dated *Philadelphia*, March 10, 1797. See p. 9. This *Answer* occasioned Dr. Priestley's "Letters to M. Volney," dated the 22d of the same month.

§ See *Note* on Sect. vii. *infra*.

|| A native of *Paris*, where he died in 1759, aged 37, to whom has been attributed *Le Christianisme Démasqué*. He furnished to *L'Encyclopédie* the articles *Déluge*,

and *Freret*,* I can truly say, that I have met with nothing in them more deserving of notice, than what I have at one time or other animadverted upon in the *Système de la Nature*,† the writings of *Hume*, Mr. *Gibbon*, Mr. *Paine*, *Lequinio*, *Voltaire*, or M. *Volney*: there is not, in my opinion, any thing more of solid argument in the works of any of them. They all abound in confident and ill-founded assertions, and gross mistakes or misrepresentations.

Young persons are apt to be dazzled with the reputation of several *unbelievers*, who have been greatly overrated by their friends. I feel no disposition to detract from their merit in any respect, though I think integrity the most important qualification in searching after truth. But, however brilliant may have been the talents of some unbelievers, (I speak only of writers,) they are not the men to whom the world is most indebted for making real advances in useful knowledge. In this respect I will venture to say, that nothing of much consequence has been done by any of them. Mr. *Hume*, I have shewn in my "Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever,"‡ did not advance a single step in metaphysics, in which he held himself out as having done the most. The excellence of *Voltaire* was that of a poet and a lively writer. *D'Alembert* can hardly be classed among writers in defence of infidelity; but his merit, besides that of an elegant writer in prose, is that of a mathematician, and he did not much advance the bounds of that branch of knowledge. The rest have no claim to reputation, but as writers against revelation. And what were any or all of them, compared with *Newton*, *Locke*, or *Hartley*, who were equally eminent as divines, and as philosophers?

But what young persons entering upon life should be most influenced by, (if by any thing besides the mere love of truth,) is the tendency of any system to promote virtue and happiness. In this respect what can we infer concerning *Voltaire* and *D'Alembert*, from their own letters, but that they were men full of self-conceit, despising even all unbelievers besides themselves, full also of jealousy and malignity, per-

Corréc, and *Société*. See *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* I. p. 474; *Gen. Biog. Dict.*, 1784, II. pp. 314, 315; *Boulanger's* Works were published at *Paris*, in 1792. See *infra*, annexed to the *Comparison*, an account of his *Dissertation* on *Peter*.

* Who died in 1749, aged 71. At the age of 25, he was received into the *L'Académie des Inscriptions*, where, on his introduction, he read a Discourse on *L'Origine des François*, for some free sentiments in which he was lodged in the *Bastille*. Among his posthumous works is *L'Examen des Apologistes du Christianisme*. (See *Appendix*, No. III. *infra*.) *Freret's* Works were published at *Paris* in 20 Vols. 18mo.

† See Vol. IV. pp. 382—389.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 398—411.

petually complaining of the world, and of all things in it; and if we join to them their correspondent and admirer,* (but one whom it is evident they did not much admire,) the late king of Prussia, we shall not add much to the mass of moral respectability, or real happiness. No Christian, in the humblest and most afflicted situation in life, need to envy them. I would not exchange my own feelings, even those in situations in which they would have thought me an object of compassion, for all the satisfaction they could have enjoyed in the happiest scenes of their lives. To social beings the great balm of life is friendship, founded on real esteem and affection, and of this they evidently had very little; whereas the attachment that I feel for many of my Christian friends, though now separated from me by the ocean, and some of them by death, is, I am confident, a source of infinitely greater satisfaction to me, than all their friendships ever were, or could be of, to them.†

We must not, however, forget that *unbelievers* of every class have their place in the great system as well as the *apostles*, though we may be thankful that we are not of the number. Of plants and animals, there are the seemingly mean and noxious, as well as the more noble and useful. A philosopher will not hate or despise any thing, but study the nature and the uses of every thing, and endeavour to derive advantage from every thing; believing that nothing was made in vain, and that a wise and benevolent Providence directs and overrules all events.

* See Note on Sect. vii. *infra*, for Frederick's gross flattery of Voltaire.

† "If, in reality, this life is only an *introduction* to a better life, or the feeble *infancy* of an existence that shall never end, it appears with unspeakable dignity; it has an infinitely important end and meaning; all its enjoyments receive an additional relish, and the face of nature will shine with greater beauty and lustre.—The reflection on our friends as heirs with us of the same blessed immortality, as persons whom we shall meet in the regions of heavenly bliss, and live with for ever, must cheer our minds in all our intercourse with them, and cause us to look upon them with the highest affection and delight. But, to consider them as only beings of a day, who are to perish in death we know not how soon, how uncomfortable is this! What a damp must it throw over our friendships!—The more agreeable the connexions are, the more distress must such apprehensions create.

"But suppose that our present connexions are to be renewed hereafter, that we are again to see those valuable persons who are gone before us from hence, or, that the friendships which now take place between worthy men, are only the beginnings of an union of minds that will be continued and perfected in the heavens: suppose this, I say, and all will be triumph. We shall have abundant encouragement to cultivate friendship. The view of death will have a tendency to increase, rather than damp the pleasures attending it." *Price* "On the Junction of Virtuous Men in the Heavenly State." *Dissert.* (iii.), pp. 344—346.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

INCREASE OF INFIDELITY.

SECTION I.

Of different Persons forming different Judgments of Things.

BELIEVERS and unbelievers, in Christianity, are equally interested in the solution of one problem, viz. on what principles the opinions of their opponents are founded. For, they must both allow that their adversaries are *men*, as well as themselves; and, therefore, that their minds are equally subject to the same general laws, by which human nature is universally governed. *Unbelievers*, not being able to deny the fact of the speedy and extensive propagation of Christianity, immediately after the death and supposed resurrection of Jesus, when both Jews and Gentiles were hostile to it, and when the believers were exposed to all kinds of hardships in consequence of their belief, must have some method of satisfying themselves how this took place, on the supposition of the history of the miracles and resurrection of Christ not being true. The Christian also must account for the want of the immediate and universal reception of his religion at that time, and of the absolute rejection of it by many intelligent, and some very worthy persons, in all Christian countries, at the present day: for this also is a fact that cannot be denied, and therefore requires to be accounted for. Having endeavoured, in my former publications, especially my “*Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever*,”* to account for the non-reception of Christianity by many persons at the time of its promulgation, I shall in the present essay have a more particular view to the rejection of it by unbelievers, and especially philosophical ones, at this day.

* Vol. IV. pp. 480—489.

To a person who himself entertains no doubt of the truth of revelation, the present prevalence of infidelity becomes the subject of a serious and interesting inquiry. We naturally think that the evidence which appears satisfactory to us, must appear so to all other persons; men being constituted alike, and consequently receiving the same impressions from the same objects.

This, indeed, is strictly true with respect to the ideas of *number* and *quantity*. For to them all minds are in the same state; and therefore to all persons *three* must ever appear more than *two*, and exactly the half of *six*: and no person acquainted with the definitions of terms in geometry can possibly deny that *the three angles of a right-angled triangle, are equal to two right angles*. But with respect to propositions which do not admit of this kind of evidence, (which depends upon the *coincidence of ideas*, or shewing that under different names the same things are comprehended,) different minds may be very differently predisposed, so that the same object will not make the same impression, nor will the same evidence give the same satisfaction.

On the subject of *religion*, *politics*, or any thing else that is equally interesting to us, we daily see that the same arguments are very differently received by different persons. The books of Scripture are equally open to all persons, and all sects of Christians profess to derive their doctrines from them. But how much do they differ from each other! And though all ancient documents are equally read by the advocates for the original freedom, or the original despotism, of the English constitution, how different are their conclusions!

How different are the opinions that have been, and still are, formed by the readers of the same histories, of the characters of *Cicero* and *Cæsar*, of the merit or demerit of *Charles I.* of England, and of the principles of the *American* and *French* Revolutions! And, in the middle ages, how differently did men think with respect to the question which agitated the whole of *Christendom* concerning the validity of the popes at *Rome* or at *Avignon*,* when all the facts, on which their judgments were formed, were equally before all the parties!

But, what is more to my purpose, different persons, according to their different circumstances and dispositions, will entertain very different opinions concerning the probability or improbability, the truth or the falsehood, of *facts*.

* See Vol. IX. pp. 493—518.

Of this we had a remarkable instance in England at the time of the invasion of *France* by the Duke of *Brunswick* and the King of *Prussia*,* some persons being confident that they had completely defeated the *French* army, and were on their march to *Paris*, and others seeing no reason to believe any such thing. And even after the retreat took place, it was a long time before the friends of government would give the least credit to it: and yet both parties had the very same intelligence.

Besides this, there are causes of assent to propositions wholly independent of any proper *evidence* presented to the mind itself; so that we may be led to presume that there is sufficient evidence, though we do not ourselves perceive it. We are more especially in danger of being misled by specious *analogies*, and superficial but fixed *maxims* grounded on such analogies. These will, with many persons, even prevent any attention being given to proper evidence; so that, though it be in itself abundantly satisfactory to the candid and attentive, it is impossible that it should have any effect upon others.

On these accounts, truths of an historical nature are liable to be received very differently by different persons: and there is such a number of circumstances to be attended to in order to form a right judgment, that a small difference in the previous state of mind will have a great effect, as to the impression that the same evidence will make; so that different persons, having different ideas with respect to the previous probability or improbability of a fact, and also of the competency or incompetency of the evidence, may draw even contrary conclusions from the same report; one thinking it to be certainly true, and acting upon that idea, and another regarding it as unquestionably false, and, in his conduct, wholly uninfluenced by it.

It may, I think, be said with truth, that the greater part of mankind form their opinions on most subjects, even those of the greatest importance, not on any evidence which themselves have considered, but, in a great measure, from the opinions of other persons, of whose judgment they have, by one means or other, been led to think very highly. Thus children, confiding in the judgment and affection of their parents, which they think has seldom, if ever, misled them, in general adopt implicitly whatever faith or practice comes recommended to them by their authority. It is by this

* In 1792. See *New Ann. Reg.* XIII. pp. 165, 181, 185, 188—190.

means, no doubt, that the children of *Jews* are almost universally of the Jewish religion, those of *Mahometans*, Mahometans; those of *Christians*, Christians; those of *Quakers*, Quakers, &c. &c. Had they formed their opinions from any evidence present to their own minds, the probability would have been, that, in all the cases, a much greater proportion of the children would have been of some religious persuasion different from that of their parents; because it was only one of a great number.

In like manner, if a person have by any means been led to form a high opinion of the sagacity and judgment of other persons, though not his parents or tutors, he will be apt to adopt their notions, without any examination of his own. And this is evidently the case with the generality of unbelievers as well as of other classes of men, few of whom will even pretend to have taken the requisite pains to form a judgment for themselves, or indeed to have that acquaintance with ancient history, and other branches of knowledge, which is necessary for the purpose.

They see many men universally celebrated for their genius, as *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, *Hume*, and *Franklin*,* to be *unbelievers*; and having, withal, other reasons to be disinclined to the belief of Christianity, they persuade themselves that such men as these could not have become unbelievers without sufficient reason, and therefore think they cannot do wrong to rank with them, and readily join them in their ridicule of religion and of the Scriptures, of which they have perhaps seen nothing but in the writings of other unbelievers, and especially the passages most open to misrepresentation. It appears to them more reputable to class with men of such superior understandings, rather than with the bulk of mankind, who retain that regard for religion which they received from their ancestors; the generality of religious persons being, it must be acknowledged, of this class. These, therefore, they are apt to hold in contempt, and, from the principle of association, the religion which they profess.

On such principles as these, or others no better founded, a person who believes, and, as he doubts not, on solid ground, that Christianity is true, must account for other persons believing it to be false.

* See Vol. I. *Memoirs*, 140; *infra*, Sect. vii., Note on *Franklin's* interview with *Voltaire*; Sect. viii. on the uncertainty that *Franklin* "died an Unbeliever."

SECTION II.

Of the Influence which the Belief of Natural Religion and Moral Character have in the Reception or Rejection of Christianity.

THERE is a necessary connexion between *natural* and *revealed* religion; for the mission of Christ, if his pretensions were well-founded, was from God, the author of nature, and proceeded from his good-will to his offspring of mankind. And when the mind is strongly impressed with the belief of the existence and perfections of God, of his constant presence and moral government, the idea of his intercourse with men, by means of miracles and revelation, in order to give them the information they want concerning their duty here, and their expectations hereafter, will appear easy, natural, and desirable, and consequently will be favourably attended to.

But when, from the want of any sense of religion, ideas of God, of his goodness and moral government, never occur to the mind, there cannot be any expectation, wish, or desire of a revelation; and the more completely this irreligious state of mind is impressed on any persons, the more improbable will every thing relating to the evidences of revelation appear; so that it will be with great difficulty, if at all, that they can be brought to give sufficient attention to them. What, then, can be our expectation of such persons, whether nominal or only practical Atheists, becoming Christians? To persons whose thoughts never go beyond the visible course of nature, who have no faith in a wise and benevolent *author of nature*, nothing will appear more improbable than the account of any deviation from it; so that no evidence whatever will weigh with them in favour of it. Nay, for want of similar feelings on the subject, they can hardly be persuaded but that all persons, of whose understandings they have a good opinion, think as they do with respect to it. “We judge,” says Dr. Hartley, “of the frame of men’s minds by that of our own, as appears from the theory of association; and whatever differs in a great degree from our own, puts on the appearance of something romantic and incredible.”* Treating of *the love of God*, he says, it is

* *Observations*, (Part ii. Prop. lxxii.,) II. p. 319. (P.)

“attended with a peace, comfort, and joy, that pass all belief of those who have not experienced it; so that they look upon the discourses and writings of those who have, to be either hypocrisy, or romantic jargon.”*

Considering the near relation that the precepts and the sanctions of revelation bear to moral duties, it is impossible but that the previous disposition of mind with respect to morality, must have considerable influence on the predisposition to receive or to reject it. And a circumstance which secretly, though not avowedly, adds to the difficulty of the cordial reception of Christianity, is, that it is by no means a system of mere speculative truth, but is intimately connected with the inward temper of mind, and the conduct of life. And both the disposition of mind and the practice required by Christianity, are such as men accustomed to the ways of the world, and whose modes of thinking and acting have been formed by them, (not excepting even many persons of a philosophical and speculative turn,) cannot easily adopt and reconcile themselves to.

That peculiar meekness and passiveness of disposition which is essential to the Christian character, though it be intimately connected with benevolence, is not that which makes a man appear to the most advantage in the eyes of the generality of mankind. On the contrary, a high spirit, and a promptness to resent injuries, which is condemned by Christianity, much more effectually recommends men to general esteem; and it is at the same time a much more easy attainment, as it requires much less force and comprehension of mind, less self-command, and less government of the passions.

To preserve this equal temper of mind, in the promiscuous commerce of the world, requires constant vigilance, and must subject a man to many mortifications. For notwithstanding the real superiority of the truly Christian character to that of the men of the world, it will not be apparent to those who have no experience, feeling, or comprehension of it. Nay, this or any other account of it will rather tend to fill them with contempt and aversion for it. Yet, that it would be happy for the world if the meek and benevolent spirit of the Gospel was universal, cannot be doubted. For certainly the man who is disposed to forgive an injury, would not voluntarily inflict one. The prevalence of this spirit would, therefore, be the reign of peace and good-will.

* *Observations*, II. p. 325. (P.)

And to what must we ascribe the wars, and other evils, that have desolated the world, and filled it with misery, but to the prevalence of an opposite spirit?

Men of the world being far more numerous than the meek, the pious, and the heavenly-minded Christians, these must expect to be treated with ridicule, as superstitious and weak-minded persons; and they may think themselves happy if they escape the effects of real hatred and malevolence. This may be expected as much from men of genius and philosophers, as from any others. Nay, the pride of understanding often leads such persons to treat those who think differently from them with peculiar contempt. But this is what our Saviour particularly apprized us of when he observed, (*John* xv. 19,) that “the world would love *its* own;” and “because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” He adds for our encouragement, (*ver.* 18,) “it hated me before it hated you;” and, (*Ch.* xvi. 33,) “be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”*

Moreover, a Christian, a person who imbibes, and is habitually actuated by, the genuine spirit of his religion, considering himself as a candidate for immortality, and giving an infinite preference to a heavenly inheritance above any thing that this world can promise him, will, in his coolest and happiest moments, be always directing his thoughts upwards, having his *affections*, as the apostle says, [*Col.* iii. 2,] placed on *heaven and heavenly things*; which as it marks a character totally different from that of the world, (of those who, having no other objects, *set their affections on things below*,) must be, on that account, difficult to maintain, every thing they see calling them one way, and their Christian principles another; so that they will live in the world as *strangers and pilgrims*; and they will accordingly, ever hold themselves ready to abandon every enjoyment in this life, and even life itself, rather than, by violating the dictates of their consciences, forfeit their title to that which they justly consider as better than life.

As the chief attention of men will be drawn to those objects which they hold dearest to them, a Christian will spend much of his time in reading and meditating upon the Scriptures, as the books which alone contain authentic records of the various dispensations of God to mankind, and especially that of Christianity which *brings*

* How unlike is this language to that of an impostor! (*P.*)

life and immortality to light. The genuine expressions of piety and benevolence, in those books, unequalled by any thing that we perceive traces of in other compositions, will continually warm his heart, and impart new satisfaction on every perusal. By this means he will catch the same spirit; and a fixed sense of the presence and providence of God will inspire his mind with the sentiments of habitual devotion, which cannot be without the most diffusive benevolence, and the deepest humility.

In fact, the principles of Christianity, duly impressed, will make a man what the Scriptures emphatically and justly call *a new creature*, in many respects the reverse of the men of the world; and in proportion to the difference of character, and its superiority, must be the apprehended difficulty of attaining it. And every attainment apprehended to be above our reach, or which we are not willing to be at the pains to acquire, will be viewed with envy and dislike. Hence arises an almost invincible prejudice in the minds of men occupied with the business and pleasures of the world, to those principles which would lead them off from them, and engage them in pursuits of an opposite nature.

The spirit and maxims of Christianity will also lead men to make an open profession of their faith, in every mode that they shall think most proper to make it known, respected, and embraced. It is what the obligation every man is under, to do all the good in his power, and to extend the blessings that he possesses, to others, absolutely requires of him. He will, therefore, think it his duty to attend public worship, and in general to give his countenance to every thing that has the propagation of the Gospel in its purity, for its object. Now, an *unbeliever*, who has not been accustomed to any thing of the kind, will feel an almost insuperable repugnance to these things, and consequently will view with great prejudice whatever would lay him under such a disagreeable obligation.

Great, indeed, must have been the power of truth, and peculiarly strong its evidence, when Christianity at its first promulgation produced greater changes than even these; for nothing could be more opposite than the prevailing sentiments and habits of the Heathens, and those of the primitive Christians. But then it was aided by *recent miracles*, a kind of evidence which, where it was duly attended to, could not be withstood. Indeed, the difficulty with which the belief of Christianity keeps its

ground at present, when externally every thing favours it, is a proof that there must have been something very different in the circumstances of its first promulgation, when, though every thing that can be named was hostile to it, it established itself, to the overthrow of Heathenism, and every thing else that stood in its way.

At this time the belief of Christianity requires *attention* to the accounts of miracles wrought in former times. The evidence does not *obtrude* itself upon men; and therefore, their prejudices and habits indisposing them to give this attention, such changes are not to be expected. We must, therefore, be content if a few only of the more inquisitive and candid, and in other respects the best disposed, of *unbelievers*, be induced to embrace Christianity, and live according to it; and if their example influence a few others, who, without much examination of their own, will feel themselves prejudiced in favour of what has gained the approbation of those whose judgment they have been led to respect; or if, without making converts, we can strengthen the faith, and improve the sentiments and conduct, of some who are already Christians.

That the great and extensive views of Christianity do tend to elevate and purify the mind, and that the narrow views of *unbelievers* tend to depress and debase it, is evident from the best-ascertained theory of the formation of the intellectual sentiments. *Unbelievers*, having no views beyond the present life,* will naturally be desirous of making the most of its enjoyments, and be unwilling to deny them-

* This was not the case with *Collins*, if he were an *unbeliever*, (see *Biog. Brit.* IV. p. 27,) nor with *Franklin*, whatever it might have been with *Voltaire*, *Rousseau* and *Hume*. See *supra*, p. 15.

I had once in my possession some original letters from *Franklin* to his friend the late Mr. George Whatley, when both had reached a very advanced age. These letters were written at Paris, while *Franklin* was Ambassador there from the *United States*. In one letter he says, "I look upon death to be as necessary to our constitutions as sleep. We shall rise, refreshed, in the morning." In another, though he does not appear to rely on the *Christian* promise of a *resurrection*, he endeavours to satisfy his mind by the following considerations:

"You see I have some reason to wish that in a future state I may not only be as well as I was, but a little better. And I hope it: for I too, with your poet, trust in God. And when I observe that there is great frugality, as well as wisdom, in his works, since he has been evidently sparing both of labour and materials; for by the various wonderful inventions of propagation he has provided for the continual peopling his world with plants and animals, without being at the trouble of repeated new creations; and by the natural reduction of compound substances to their original elements, capable of being employed in new compositions, he has prevented the necessity of creating new matter; for that the earth, water, air, and perhaps fire, which being compounded, form wood, do when the wood is dissolved, return and again become air, earth, fire and water: I say, that when I see nothing annihilated, and not even a drop of water wasted, I cannot suspect the annihilation of

selves any of those gratifications, which, in their opinion, make life desirable. Hence great numbers give themselves up, as far as they can, without restraint, to sensual gratifications. They are, indeed, destitute of those religious principles which we find to be so necessary, especially in youth, to restrain the irregular indulgence of the natural passions. And the necessary consequence of this indulgence, (to say nothing of the more manifest evils to which it leads,) is a great debasement of our rational nature. For though, as *Hartley* observes, "the sensible pleasures are the first pleasures of which we are capable, and are the foundation of the intellectual ones, which are formed from them in succession, according to the law of association ;"* yet, "it is in our power, by an inordinate pursuit of the sensible pleasures, to convert the mental affections into sources of pain, and to impair and cut off many of the intellectual pleasures, so that the balance shall be against us upon the whole."† And, as he says, "the great business and purport of the present life" is "the transformation of sensuality into spirituality, by associating the sensible pleasures, and their traces, with proper foreign objects."‡

As the views of *unbelievers*, so their general maxims of conduct will be different from those of Christians. *Unbelievers* feeling no interest in any thing beyond this life, their present happiness will not only be the great object of their pursuit, but a regard to it will be the foundation of their *moral principles*. To this they will and must refer every thing; and their love of others, of their country, and of mankind, will be no farther regarded by them than as it tends to promote their own happiness; consequently, though, from the effect of a better education, of good early habits, or of emulation, they may be led to overlook their individual interest, and become even enthusiastically patriotic, they cannot be so from cool reflection, and, therefore, their generosity and public spirit cannot be absolutely depended upon,

souls, or believe that he will suffer the daily waste of millions of minds ready made that now exist, and put himself to the continual trouble of making new ones. Thus finding myself to exist in the world, I believe I shall in some shape or other always exist." See *Mon. Repos.* I. pp. 138, 195.

Dr. Franklin appears to have been a serious *Theist*, from whom the strange expression, *continual trouble*, must have escaped inadvertently, *currente calamo*. It is remarkable that *Franklin's* friend, Dr. Price, after *Butler*, finds a *profusion* and *seeming waste*, rather than a *frugality*, in creation; and hence reconciles himself to the "future final loss of being," as the doom of a large proportion of mankind. See Vol. II. p. 64; and the references in the *Note*.

* *Observations* (Part ii. *Prop.* I.), II. p. 213. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 212. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 214. (P.)

nor can they arrive at that dignity and elevation of mind which, with his best judgment, carries the Christian wholly out of himself in the great pursuits of disinterested benevolence, a regard to the will of God and to conscience, which *Hartley* describes as the greatest attainment of man, his greatest perfection and happiness.

The unbeliever in a future state will naturally think that the demands of the public upon him have their limits, and that he is not bound to do more for his country than his country does for him. Whereas the Christian considers the demands of all, to whom it is in his power to render any service, as having no limits but those of the power itself. According to the generous and exalted principles of Christianity, we are, like our Saviour, even to lay down our lives, not only for our friends, but even for our enemies, hoping for our recompence *at the resurrection of the just*.

The lower pursuits of our nature are checked by the principle of self-interest. But these are designed to be only a means to the great objects above-mentioned, and become gradually absorbed and lost in them, just as an express regard to other *means* is lost in the contemplation of their proper *ends*.* It is the natural tendency of the principle of association, which is the great law of our intellectual nature, to bring men to this state, which *Hartley* calls *self-annihilation*. And if our existence, under such influences as we are now exposed to, be continued a sufficient length of time, all men will arrive at it. But this progress may be accelerated or retarded by our attention to, or neglect of the proper discipline of the mind. They who purposely turn their attention from the consideration of God and his providence, respecting the present and future condition of man, as discovered to us by revelation, will be thrown back in this intellectual course, till, in some new situation, some more severe discipline shall force them into it again; while they who exert themselves to cultivate a sense of piety to God, and never lose sight of the great views of things opened to us in the Scriptures, will proceed towards the great end of their being, with a constant and accelerated progress.†

* See *Appendix*, No. I.

† I cannot help observing in this place, that the coincidence of the great precepts of Christianity, *the love of God, above all, and the love of our neighbour, as ourselves*, with the ultimate tendency of our natures, as demonstrated by *Hartley*, on the principle of the association of ideas, is a strong argument in favour of revelation. How came men so illiterate, and so ignorant in other respects, as the writers of the books of Scripture, to hit upon sentiments so just and sublime, and

Another source of real dignity and greatness of mind, in a manner peculiar to believers in revelation, is piety, a lively sense of the constant presence, the providence, and moral government of God, inspiring a deep reverence even for his name, and naturally leading to that intercourse with him, mental or vocal, which we term *prayer*. If frequent commerce with great men, and the contemplation of great objects, tend to elevate the mind, the same cannot but be the effect of this constant intercourse with the greatest and best of beings, of, as it were, seeing God in every thing, and every thing in God.

On the other hand, *unbelievers*, having no faith in such an intimate intercourse as the history of revelation represents the Author of nature keeping up with mankind, or in his great and benevolent designs respecting them, will not, at least will not easily or generally, give much attention to him, though they should not absolutely deny his existence; so that they will have no great restraint on their minds from lightly profaning his name, in the low habits of cursing and swearing, and will not think such practices to be sinful; and they will laugh at the idea of *prayer*. By these means, however, their minds become insensibly debased; and whatever be their intellectual attainments in other respects, their affections will be low and groveling. A man cannot have any reverence for a Being who is not the object of his frequent and respectful attention.

If there be any truth in this account of the superiority of the truly Christian character above that of those who look no farther than the present life; as the latter, from its being wholly remote from their ideas, will not have any just con-

so much superior to any that were known to the greatest philosophers in ancient times? (*P.*)

The following lines, by *Dryden*, are not inapplicable to this subject, though he adopts the common, but now justly-disputed theory of *Miracles*, as not, of themselves, sufficient to prove a *divine* interposition:

“ Whence, but from heav’n, could men unskill’d in arts,
In several ages born, in several parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lye?
Unask’d their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price.
If on the book itself we cast our view,
Concurrent Heathens prove the story true:
The doctrine, miracles, which must convince,
For heav’n in them appeals to human sense:
And though they prove not, they confirm the cause,
When what is taught agrees with nature’s laws.”

ception of it, the *religious principles* which tend to form it will be regarded by them with prejudice ; and instead of admiring them, they may appear an object of dislike, and even of ridicule : just as ignorant persons are apt to dislike and ridicule the manners of foreigners, though more polished than their own, and in all respects superior to them. Even persons who have been educated in the belief of Christianity may, by degrees, contract this unfavourable state of mind with respect to it.

The effect of discontinuing to read the Scriptures, though some knowledge of them might have been acquired in early life, the never hearing them mentioned in serious conversation, and not attending any public worship, will be, that the impression made by the early reading of them will grow fainter and fainter, and at length will wholly disappear, and all respect for them will vanish. If, then, in the course of conversation with *unbelievers*, and the frequent reading of their writings, only those parts of the Scriptures be mentioned which, singly taken, are most liable to ridicule, a contempt for the whole will be generated ; and the evidence of revelation not having been properly studied or impressed on the mind, infidelity will be the unavoidable consequence. This will be more especially the case with young persons in the gayer circles of life, who are not themselves distinguished for their mental ability, but who are apt to look up to those that are, and are too ready to join with them in a contempt for the opinions and practices of the vulgar.

It is very possible, from the force of the prejudice which, arising in this manner, indisposes the mind to every thing that bears the name of *religion*, that the very mention of such things as *Balaam's ass*,* or *Jonah's whale*,† shall be sufficient to give them an invincible disgust to every thing connected with them, and wholly prevent their giving any proper attention to the general evidence of the great facts on which the system of revelation is founded ; though, when duly considered, it would infinitely overpower all objections from such circumstances as these.

But the strongest prejudice against Christianity will arise from an addictedness to those vices which revelation prohibits. Men who are not strictly virtuous, and who know that every violation of the laws of virtue is an offence against religion, will, whether they will confess it or not, or, indeed,

* See, on *Numb.* xxii. 27, 29, Vol. XI. p. 254.

† See, on *Jonah* i. 17, Vol. XII. p. 360, and the references *Note* *.

whether they attend to it or not, be impressed with a secret dislike of the subject, and will therefore gladly avail themselves of any excuse for giving no attention to it. This must be the case with all young men who have been addicted to profane swearing, or to that commerce of the sexes and other practices which Christianity condemns. And not seeing the immediate bad consequences of those practices, they often will not allow them to be vices, and even find a handle against Christianity for making them to be such.

This subject receives great light from Dr. Hartley's doctrine of *rational and practical assent*, which he justly observes, "exert a perpetual, reciprocal effect upon one another;" from which he infers, that "vicious men, that is, all persons who want practical faith, must be prejudiced against the historical and other rational evidences, in favour of revealed religion."* If "the practical assent—generate the rational," so that, as he observes, "the sanguine are apt to believe and assert what they hope,"† they who are, with respect to revelation, in a state of mind the reverse of sanguine, or previously disinclined to believe, will be apt to assert and believe the incredibility and falsehood of it, be its evidences in themselves ever so satisfactory.

"Practical Atheism, or that neglect of God where the person thinks of him seldom, and with reluctance, and pays little or no regard to him in his actions, though he does not deny him in words," as well as *speculative* Atheism, he farther says, proceeds "from an explicit or implicit sense of guilt, and a consequent fear of God, sufficient to generate an aversion to the thoughts of him, and to the methods by which the love might be generated, and yet too feeble to restrain from guilt."‡

Inattention to the subject of religion, however generated, naturally leads to infidelity; and much intercourse with the world, the *busy* or the *gay*, the *political*, the *commercial*, or the *philosophical*, as it is now conducted, tends to produce this inattention. In this case, the mind is wholly occupied with things foreign to religion. It never becomes the subject of conversation, and there not being in the mind any ideas that have associations with it, it will not easily occur even to a man's private thoughts. When this is the case, whether men be nominally unbelievers in Christianity or not, they will be no better for it, as it cannot have any

* *Observ.* (Pt. i. *Prop.* lxxxvi.), I. pp. 332, 333. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 332. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* (*Prop.* xcvi.), I. p. 492. (P.)

influence on their thoughts, words, or actions. It will not at all contribute to form the *character*, or give a turn to their sentiments. Their minds are so wholly engrossed by the things of this world, that they never raise their views above them. They have no hopes or wishes respecting a future world, and therefore cannot be prepared to make any sacrifices to the consideration of it.

This inattention to religion has of late years been increasing, and is now become very general. In *France*, and other Popish countries, religion has never been any serious object to men of the world; and whenever it has obtruded itself upon their notice, it has been in some form that could not command their respect, but rather excite their contempt and disgust. Can we wonder, then, at the general prevalence of infidelity in France,* and other countries similarly situated in that respect?

It may be said, and with some appearance of reason, that if some persons be biassed against the evidences of revelation, others will be no less biassed in favour of them. A good man, who hopes that a future life will be in his favour, will naturally wish that there may be such a state, and will therefore overlook deficiencies in the evidence for it. Admitting this, it is certainly some argument in favour of revelation, that the prejudices of the virtuous are for it, and those of the vicious against it; and a state of absolute indifference to a question of this magnitude is impossible. It is what all men are too nearly interested in.

That *life* is universally considered as a thing of great value, is evident from the care of all mankind to preserve it; consequently, an *everlasting life* must be of infinite value to any person who hopes to enjoy himself in it. A virtuous man, therefore, free from superstition, cannot but ardently wish for it, though persons of a different character, who, secretly at least, suspect that a future life would not be to their advantage, may wish that there was no such thing for themselves or others. In this state of mind, especially if they be irritated by controversy on the subject, they may even come not to be able to bear the mention of it without emotions of dissatisfaction and dislike, which will extend to all who believe and rejoice in it; and what is a frequent, though not a necessary consequence, they may take great pains to destroy that faith in others. On the other hand, a Christian, hoping for a future life for himself, wishes it for all other

* See Vol. I. *Memoirs*, 118; Vol. XV. p. 366.

persons, and considers with compassion those who are destitute of so cheering a persuasion, and will earnestly endeavour to impart it to them.

But admitting that a good man will be prejudiced in favour of the arguments for a future state, and, consequently, in favour of Christianity, it may not only be said, that the interest he feels in the question will induce him to be scrupulous in the examination of it, but that the situation of the best of men is such that their hopes and wishes will not lay so great a bias on their minds as that which affects vicious persons in a contrary way.

Such is the advantage which things *seen* have over things *unseen*, in consequence of the commerce of the world continually obtruding the former upon our attention, that a tendency to believe in a future state will generally be less than a tendency to unbelief; since, as *Hartley* justly observes, “vividness of the ideas” tends to “unite the subject and predicate” of propositions “sooner and closer.”* Our ideas of a future state, according to Christianity, are at best general and indistinct, so as not to lay much hold on the imagination, like those of the Paradise of *Mahomet*. According to him, the joys of heaven are definite enough,† and, therefore, more likely to excite vivid ideas. But this is not the religion that I am defending.

‡ Great sanguineness of expectation may promote belief. But all that the generality of Christians, who are free from enthusiasm, pretend to, is a humble *hope* that their lot will be better hereafter than it is at present. Such is the diffidence that truly good men have of themselves, arising from the consciousness of their imperfections, that they hardly ever attain to more, though naturally sanguine in other respects. Consequently, a good man who only *hopes* that a future life will be in his favour, will not be so much biassed by his hope, or belief, as a wicked man, who justly dreads the thought of it, will be biassed against it. §

* *Observ.* (Pt. i. *Prop.* lxxxvi.), I. p. 331. (*P.*)

† See Vol. XVI. pp. 347—351.

‡ This paragraph was not in the *second* edition.

§ *Hartley* thus concludes (on *Prop.* lxxxvi.): “1. When a person says *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*; it shews that the rational and practical assent are at variance, that they have opposite causes, and that neither of these has yet destroyed the other. 2. The rational and practical faith in religious matters are excellent means of begetting each other. 3. Vicious men, that is, all persons who want practical faith, must be prejudiced against the historical and other rational evidences of revealed religion.” *Observations*, I. p. 333.

SECTION III.

Of the necessary Consequence of an Acquaintance with the Scriptures, and of a candid and impartial Attention to them.

THE various obstacles to a candid and impartial reading of the Scriptures, explained in the preceding *Section*, are much to be lamented, since nothing else seems to be wanting to the conversion of all *unbelievers*. Could they but read the historical parts of the *Old* and *New Testaments* with a reasonable share of candour and impartiality, it would be impossible but that their minds must be impressed with a persuasion of their truth, they bear so many internal marks of it. No person reading the books of *Moses*, the life of *Christ*, or the *Acts of the Apostles*, with due attention, and with a sufficient knowledge of ancient history and of human nature, can believe such men to have been impostors. The opinion he could not but conceive of their excellent characters for piety, benevolence, and integrity, would repel every idea of the kind, whatever difficulties he might find in reconciling some parts of the narrative with others; difficulties, however, such as we find in all histories written by different persons. And this favourable impression concerning the character of the Scripture historians, and the persons whose history they write, would prepare the mind for a serious and candid examination of the external evidence, which would presently appear superior to that of any other history whatever.

But by persons previously disposed to cavil, the most important considerations are frequently overlooked, and, therefore, it is impossible that they should make a proper impression on their minds. Otherwise, they could not but be sensible that, in rejecting revealed religion, they subjected themselves to much greater difficulties than they could have found in consequence of receiving it, admitting these to be considerable. If *Moses* was an impostor, it must surely appear extraordinary that, without the advantage of any splendid talents, as those of an orator or a warrior, he should impose upon a whole nation, and make them receive a system of religion and laws to which they always shewed the greatest aversion.

But admitting that a man of superior knowledge should arise in a nation so ignorant as the Jews were, he could only have imposed upon them by pretences to *miracles* ; and let them be supposed ever so stupid, and to *reason* ever so ill, they certainly had the external *senses* of other men. And if the nature of the miracles of *Moses* be considered, it must be evident that it was out of his power, or that of any man, to impose upon others so grossly, as, if the Jews were imposed upon at all, they must have been ; the miracles were upon so large a scale. Let any person only consider the nature and the magnitude of the miracles exhibited in *Egypt*, such as the changing of all the water in the river into blood, or any thing resembling blood ; the deaths of the first-born, and of the first-born only, of man and of beast too, through the whole extent of the country, in one night, and this distinctly announced some time before ; the passage of the whole nation through the *Red Sea* ; their hearing the articulate pronunciation of the ten commandments from *Mount Sinai* ; their being fed with manna forty years, with many others ; and he must be sensible that the most stupid of mankind could never have been so grossly imposed upon. With respect to the *books* containing an account of these miracles, there is as much evidence of their having been written by *Moses*, and of their having been published while the events were recent, as there is of the genuineness and antiquity of any other writings whatever, whether we consider their internal or external evidence.

If it be supposed that the books were written in any latter period, it must be so much the more difficult to account for the nation receiving them as ancient and genuine writings, and their submitting to the laws and institutions prescribed in them, during the time of their extreme proneness to idolatry, which certainly continued till the *Babylonish* Captivity ; and after this time all attempts to impose upon the nation such books as those of the *Old Testament*, must have been in vain. Let a similar attempt be made with respect to any other nation in the world, and let the event determine.

Independently of the difficulty of imposing upon any nation in such a manner as the Jews must have been imposed upon, and with respect to facts notoriously true, or notoriously false, there is surely some difficulty in accounting for *Moses* or any other Jew delivering such a system of religion and laws as his books contain, a system so totally different from those of all other neighbouring nations, and so much superior to them, without any superior advantage

with respect to genius or education. When all other nations, without exception, were devoted to the worship of a multiplicity of deities, and practised the most abominable and cruel rites, how came Moses alone to teach the doctrine of *One God*, the sole creator and governor of all things, and that he was to be worshipped by rites entirely free from all impurity or cruelty? How came the religion of the *Hebrews* to be the only one in all antiquity that was favourable to purity of morals, and, what is perhaps more extraordinary still, free from the superstitions of *divination*, *magic*, and *necromancy*, to which all ancient nations, without exception, were addicted? It is an ignorance of nature, or of the real causes of events, that is the parent of all this superstition. But how came *Moses* and the Jews to be more knowing in this respect than the *Egyptians*, the *Greeks*, or the *Romans*?

The same and still greater difficulties occur with respect to Christianity, and the history of its promulgation, which must be wholly overlooked by *unbelievers*; and yet, compared with them, all the difficulties that remain upon the minds of Christians, considerable as they are confessed to be, are as nothing. If Jesus and the apostles worked no real miracles, how came so many thousands of the nation of the Jews, averse as it is well known they were to their pretensions, to believe that they did; when it was at the hazard of every thing dear to them in life, and even of life itself, that they professed their belief? How were the eyes, the ears, and other senses of those Jews who were contemporary with Jesus and the apostles, imposed upon, as they must have been, if no miracles were really wrought! For this was not a business of reasoning and *argumentation*, with respect to which it is acknowledged that it might not be difficult for one man to impose upon others.

If it be said that the contemporaries of Jesus and of the apostles were not imposed upon, but that the imposition began at a later period, the difficulty will be much increased; because, whenever the story was told as a thing that took place in *time past*, it must have been well known that no evidence of it existed. If such books as those of the evangelists and the *Acts of the Apostles* were first published at this day, could it be possible to make them be received as ancient and genuine writings, authentic and true histories? And could a single man be found, who would risk his liberty, or his life, for his faith in them?

If the writings of the apostles be spurious, it will not be denied that the epistles of *Pliny* are genuine; and from

them it appears that Christianity was the general belief of the province of *Bithynia*,* and probably of all *Asia Minor*, in his time. And could this have been the case, if its origin had not been prior to his time, and indeed as early as the evangelical history supposes it to have been?

If the Gospels, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, do not contain a true history, the epistles of *Paul*, *Peter*, *James* and *John*, must be spurious too. But let any person of common sagacity peruse them, with the least attention, and say whether they bear any marks of forgery, and whether they do not as strictly correspond to the events and circumstances of the times in which those men lived, as the epistles of *Cicero* do to the incidents of his life; and consequently, whether they be not as great a confirmation of the *Gospel* history, as his epistles are of the *Roman*. There cannot be a doubt but that the writers of those epistles, whoever they were, were very different from one another, and from the author of the *Acts of the Apostles*. So complex a forgery as this must have been, if it be a forgery, is far beyond the powers of man; and yet the writers discover no marks of superior ability.

But, independently of these difficulties respecting matters of *history*, how could it have been in the power of a Jewish carpenter, with fishermen for his principal assistants and followers, thus to impose upon the Jewish nation and the world? How came such a person as he to form so sublime and just ideas of God and of virtue, and especially to teach the doctrine of a future state with more distinctness and authority than any man who had ever preceded him? And it must be considered that the doctrine of Jesus on this subject was that of the resurrection of the dead at a future period, a doctrine the most improbable in itself, and fundamentally different from the doctrine of the soul surviving the body, on which principle only, the Heathen philosophers taught a future state. How came this Jewish carpenter and his followers to effect such a revolution in the religious system of all the civilized part of the world, as had never been attempted, or thought of, by any man before him?

Are not these difficulties, and many others might be added to them, of a very serious nature? And yet they do not seem to have occurred to the generality of *unbelievers*. Indeed they seem not to have had a sufficient knowledge of

* See Vol. IX. p. 106; *Lardner*, VII. p. 315.

facts in ancient history, to be apprized of them ; and the few who have mentioned, or alluded to any of them, do not appear to have considered them with attention, as becomes philosophers, but to have contented themselves with giving the most superficial and unsatisfactory answers ; ascribing the belief of the miracles above-mentioned to the general *credulity of mankind*. But, in other cases, men do not content themselves with assigning general causes for particular effects. And, credulous as men sometimes are, they cannot be made to believe *any thing*, especially things which they have no predisposition to believe, and advanced by persons to whom they are not previously disposed to give credit. A cause should be assigned for their credulity, in every particular case : for every specific effect must have a specific cause ; the human mind being subject to as regular laws as any thing else in nature.

But while these considerations are not *attended to*, the Scripture history will necessarily appear as fabulous as the Popish legends ; the circumstances of difference, though so great, being wholly overlooked by the reader.

SECTION IV.

Of Causes of Infidelity not unfavourable to the Moral Character, and a Method of judging when they operate.

IN general, I doubt not, the inattention of *unbelievers* to such considerations as those above-mentioned, arises from something in their character and habits of life unfavourable to them ; habits which render them averse to the doctrines and precepts of revealed religion, so that they secretly wish they may not be true. But the same effect may be produced from a turn of mind which leads men to look at the dark side of every thing, and to fear and suspect that every thing they wish to be true may prove false. In that state of mind, they will always incline to dwell on the objections to revealed religion, rather than on the direct evidence for its truth : and the consequence of this attention to the one, in preference to the other, may be a state of scepticism and incredulity ; and thus some very worthy and well-disposed persons may class with *unbelievers* ; but they are comparatively few.

That this is a very possible case, we see with respect to other things. How many persons are there in circumstances

in which any stranger would conclude that they must be happy, and have great enjoyment of themselves, and yet, for want of *attending* to these circumstances, and by perpetually dwelling upon things that are unfavourable to them, they are far from being happy ! On the contrary, they are continually complaining ; at the same time that the things they complain of appear to all their friends to be very inconsiderable.

From whatever turn of mind it be, that persons are led to give more attention to the objections to revelation than to the evidences for its truth, they will lean to the side of scepticism and infidelity. But, in the eye of reason and of God, infidelity arising from these very different *causes* will be regarded in a very different light. In some it will be an argument of profligacy ; in others of anxiety and timidity.

That the infidelity of many persons in *France*, has arisen from inattention and gross ignorance, whatever was the cause of it, is evident to every person in the least conversant with ancient history. For M. *Volney*, as I shall shew,* supposes that no such person as Jesus Christ ever existed. Whereas, had he given any attention to the history of the times in which Christianity was promulgated, whether written by Christians or others, he could have had no more doubt of the existence of *Jesus Christ*, whatever he had thought of his miracles, than of that of *Julius Cæsar*. It is as much in vain to argue with such a person as this, as with a *Chinese*, or even a *Hottentot*.

Many *unbelievers* will say, and I doubt not with truth, that they have both read the Scriptures themselves and the best defences of revelation that have been recommended to them, and yet see no reason to believe in it. To this, nothing can be replied, but that in the state of mind that I have described, it is impossible for them to give what deserves to be called a *due* attention to any just representation of things. The words in which they are expressed may be heard, or read, but the mind may be so pre-occupied that it shall be impossible for them to make their proper impression ; and the best arguments may be no sooner heard or read than they shall be entirely forgotten, or wholly neglected, so that they shall have no more *effect*, than if they had never been presented to the mind at all.

The possibility of wholly overlooking things, even with the eyes open, and the object immediately before them, we see in persons who are searching for particular plants, or

* See Sect. viii. *infra*.

other objects, among things of a similar nature. A hundred things may come in view in the course of this search, but, not being particularly noticed, the person, who nevertheless *must* have seen them, shall not be able to recollect his having seen them at all. The same is the case with a person who peruses a book with a particular view, or a particular bias upon his mind. He does not see, or at least he does not regard, any thing but what he is purposely looking for, and wishes to find; and yet he may not be conscious to himself of any partiality or bias at all. In this case it is hardly possible for the mind to perceive its own delusion, and there seems to be no remedy for it.

It is, however, every man's interest, and therefore should be his endeavour, to keep his mind as free from prejudice as possible, in order that every truth may meet with no obstruction to its reception with him; and I think the following consideration may, perhaps, be of some use to enable a person to distinguish whether his mind be under any unfavourable prejudice with respect to revealed religion, or not:

Whatever appears advantageous to us, we naturally wish to obtain. Now to a virtuous and well-disposed mind, the desire of having his existence continued, that he may see more and more of the admirable system of which he forms a part, and enjoy his being, with increasing advantage, is surely unavoidable, if any thing be so. He will, therefore, naturally *wish* that Christianity, which alone holds out this glorious prospect to virtuous men, should be true. It cannot, if it be duly considered, appear to be a matter of indifference to any man, like a mere speculative truth, a proposition in *geometry* or *algebra*, in which he has no interest. Also, every person must *know* whether he has this wish or not: for if he duly apprehend the great object, he must have a very earnest wish that Christianity may be true; and if he do give up the belief of it, it will be with sensible regret.

Now it appears to me, that few of the *unbelievers* that I have ever conversed with, have any concern about the matter, or rather they wish that Christianity may not be true; for they rejoice and triumph in every seeming refutation of it. I therefore conclude, that they are in such a state of mind as inclines them to wish that it may not be true, probably from suspecting that they should be rather losers than gainers in consequence of it. They, therefore, prefer even annihilation to the prospect of that future state

of retribution which Christianity holds out to them ; and from a dislike of the subject, they apply to other studies, and engage in other pursuits, which entirely preclude all attention to this, though, in itself, certainly the most important, and the most interesting, of all others.

To a person of a thoughtful and speculative turn of mind, capable of enlarged and extensive views of things, the Scriptures present such an idea of the conduct of Providence, as he cannot abandon without peculiar regret. To an unbeliever in Christianity and a future state, the ways of God, if he believe in any God at all, must appear exceedingly dark. He neither knows how things came into being, nor to what they tend ; and his own personal interest and importance in the great scheme is as nothing. But revelation opens a great, a glorious, and most animating prospect, and one in which every individual has the greatest personal interest. We are there informed concerning the origin of the human race, of their final destination, and of many particulars of the vast plan of Providence, including the divine missions of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, the great object of which was to form men to virtue here, and to happiness hereafter.

We also learn in the Scriptures, that all the evils of life, the contemplation of which cannot but perplex and distress the serious unbeliever, are only a part of that discipline which is necessary to the great end above-mentioned. We therefore see the hand, the benevolent hand of God in every thing ; and, though in a state of trouble and persecution, can *go on our way rejoicing*. In the history of revelation, we see the attention which God has given to men, in affording them light by degrees, and as they were able to bear it ; instructing them, more or less, from the beginning of the world, giving them more distinct and important lessons by *Moses and the Prophets*, and completing the whole scheme by *Christ and the Apostles*.

By the light of revelation we have the pleasing prospect of the gradual improvement of the whole human race, in their progress from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge, and from a state of barbarity and perpetual hostility, to a state of universal peace, virtue and happiness, in which we are assured that this world is to terminate.

Now, what has an *unbeliever* to contemplate in comparison with these, and other great views which revelation holds out to us, the contemplation of which tends to elevate and ennoble the mind, so as to make a man a superior kind of being to a person who has no knowledge or belief of

them? I cannot help concluding, therefore, that a man who voluntarily shuts his eyes to this prospect, must have a strong bias upon his mind, and of a very unworthy kind; and if he does it involuntarily, and with regret, he will not do it without great hesitation, and the most sensible concern.

Let the *unbeliever*, then, be ingenuous, and say, whether he really *feels* this concern, or not. If he be insensible to the great views I have mentioned, I shall conclude that his mind is in a low and degraded state; and that, whatever else he may know, he is destitute of the very elements of a right judgment in *this* case, and must be left to his own delusions. On the whole, I cannot help concluding with Dr. Hartley, that “notwithstanding the great prevalence of infidelity in the present times, it is seldom found to consist with an accurate knowledge of ancient history, sacred and profane, and never with an exalted piety and devotion to God.”*

SECTION V.

Of the kind of Objections that have been made to Divine Revelation.

IF we consider the objections that have been made to revelation by the most celebrated *unbelievers*, we shall find them to be of such a nature, as to imply no great attention to the subject, or such an examination as historical evidence necessarily requires. By some *prescriptive*† arguments, which may be formed in a very short time, they save themselves the trouble of that accurate inquiry into the state of facts, which cannot be made without time and patience, but which the discussion of the evidences of revelation absolutely requires.

The great question between *believers* and *unbelievers*, in revelation, is, whether it was possible, consistently with the principles of human nature, as we now find them, and as we must all take it for granted they ever have been, for such numbers of persons as the whole *Jewish* nation consisted of at their departure from *Egypt*, and so many thou-

* *Obscrv.* (Pt. ii. *Prop.* xliv.) II. p. 190. (*P.*)

† Tertullian wrote a treatise, entitled, *De Præscriptione*, in which, without considering the arguments of the heretics of his time, he endeavoured to prove that they could not be in the right, as their tenets were not held in the churches that were founded by the apostles. (*P.*)

sands of Jews at *Jerusalem*, at the time of the promulgation of Christianity, as were then converted to it, to have believed the miracles recorded in the Scriptures, when they required nothing more than the evidence of the senses, and when they had every motive that men could have, to ascertain the truth of the facts, and yet that there should have been no truth in them. This, the *believer* says, would be a greater miracle than any that the history of revelation supposes. Now the solution of this problem has never been attempted by *unbelievers*. Nor, indeed, has the case itself been properly noticed by them; they having contented themselves with ascribing this great effect, in a random and arbitrary manner, to the credulity of mankind, without endeavouring to shew that, in any similar circumstances, mankind have discovered the same credulity. This will appear if we consider, as I briefly shall do, the general turn of their arguments.

1. Many *unbelievers*, and especially Mr. Hume, without pretending to examine any historical evidence, have satisfied themselves with saying, that miracles being contrary to our own experience, all accounts of them must be false.* But this is easily shewn to be no true state of the case, since events may take place occasionally, which do not happen always; so that miracles might have been wrought in the time of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, and not at this day. There is no contradiction in this, since both may be true. All that can in reason be said is, that miracles being unusual appearances, and not analogous to any that fall under our own observation, they require more definite evidence than ordinary facts. But accounts of them should not be rejected without a due examination of the evidence alleged for them.

What would philosophers say, if, upon the publication of any new fact, or appearance in nature, no attention should be paid to the evidence produced in favour of it, but it should be treated as a thing that was impossible, *à priori*, and therefore undeserving of examination? Many *phenomena* in nature appear at first sight to be inconsistent, as those of *magnetism* and *electricity*, and many in chemistry, with the laws of gravitation, which are not so in reality, and only shew that we had been too hasty in drawing general conclusions, which now require to be modified, the facts in both the cases being unquestionable.

2. Most *unbelievers* have endeavoured to prove that, with-

* See *Philosophical Essays*, (No. X.,) Ed. 2, 1750, l. pp. 180-181; Price's *Dissert.* pp. 384-439.

out any examination of the particular facts on which the truth of the *Jewish* and *Christian* revelations rest, we may take it for granted, that those religions *cannot* be true ; being, as they conceive, in several respects, unworthy of God and inconsistent with the dictates of natural religion.

But what do we know of nature, or the Author of nature, except from facts ? The first thing, therefore, that is to be done, is to inquire into the truth of the facts ; and if the evidence be sufficient to establish *this*, we must leave the question of their consistency, or inconsistency, with other facts, to subsequent discussion, however we may be induced, by any new appearances, to correct the conclusions we may have drawn from preceding ones.

Deductions concerning the moral attributes of God from the works of nature, are by no means so easy and certain, as from facts in the history of his transactions with men ; and there is no process of investigation so familiar to the mind, as that by which we judge of human testimony. How then can we be authorised to say, that what is fully ascertained, by indisputable evidence, to have been actually done or said by the Divine Being, (evidenced by such works as only the Author of nature could do,) is inconsistent with any thing that the mere light of nature teaches us concerning him ?

In fact, they who reject revelation on this pretence, first form an idea of the Supreme Being from their own imaginations, and not from the productions of nature, and then conclude that certain things ascribed to him in the scripture history are unworthy of him. But if the history be sufficiently authenticated, the seemingly anomalous parts in the Divine conduct should be treated like similar anomalies in natural appearances, and in the conduct of Providence ; leading us only to limit and modify former conclusions, which were before too general. At least, they should not be at once given up as false, but be considered as *difficulties* on which future observations may throw some light.

But that the moral character of the Divine Being, as deduced from revelation, is, on the whole, taking the great outline of it, free from all reasonable objection, is what no person can deny. Nothing is more clearly inferred from the light of nature, than what we learn in the Scriptures concerning the Author of nature, viz. that God is *one* ; that he is himself the maker and governor of all things ; that he is infinitely powerful, wise, and good ; that he is a being of the strictest veracity ; that he is merciful to the penitent ; that

he is a lover of virtue and a hater of vice ; and that he will reward the one and punish the other, if not in this life, yet surely in another.* It is impossible to read the Scriptures in the most superficial manner, without forming this idea of God ; and a thousand doubts concerning the rectitude or the goodness of God will arise from considering the works of nature, for one that can occur, to the most prejudiced person, to any of the moral attributes of God from the history of revelation.

The general inferences, therefore, above-mentioned, should remain with us, (even more than the belief of the goodness of God from the works of nature,) whatever we may be able to make of some particular circumstances which seem to be at variance with them. But it appears to me, that all the objections that have been made of this kind (the principal of which relates to the extermination of the *Canaanites*,) are easily and satisfactorily answered.† However, the objection to the whole of revelation from an attention to particular objectionable parts, requires no time, or labour of examination, and supposes only the most superficial knowledge.

3. Other persons become *unbelievers* from seeing such doctrines maintained by *believers*, as they find to be contrary to common sense ; and such abuses of other kinds, as they find in all the civil establishments of Christianity, and which are highly injurious to civil society ; taking it for granted that such doctrines and such abuses are authorized by the Christian religion. They more particularly revolt at the doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, held by all *Catholics*, and that of the *Trinity*, by most *Protestants*, and at the excessive power assumed by the Popes, and indeed by priests of most Christian communions. But, surely, in a matter of this moment, every man ought, at least, to take the pains to see with his own eyes, and to judge, by the rules of fair criticism, whether such doctrines be contained in the Scriptures, and whether such abuses be authorized by Christ and the apostles.

4. It has hitherto been unfortunately maintained by almost all Christians, that the Scriptures are divinely inspired ; and this being assumed by *unbelievers*, every impropriety of sen-

* Mr. Cooper remarks that Dr. Priestley here " would seem to intimate that a future state might be clearly made out by the light of nature." He adds, " this is certainly inadvertency, and by no means conformable to his constant deliberate sentiments on that subject, as expressed particularly in his Institutes." *Memoirs*, 1806, App. No. II. p. 320, Note. See Vol. II. pp 58—61.

† See, on *Deut. xx. 16*, Vol. XI. p. 285, Note *.

timent in the writers, and the slightest contradictions in the history, sufficiently authorize them, as they think, to reject the whole. But they should, at least, see whether the writers *pretend* to such inspiration, which they evidently do not; or, if they did, they might be mistaken with respect to that circumstance, as they give no evidence of it, and the history be, in the main, as authentic as any other whatever.

In all these cases, a person taking it for granted that revelation *cannot* be true, takes no pains to inform himself concerning the evidence of the facts, which would require much reading, and patient investigation, and consequently much *time*. He does not so much as read the Scriptures themselves, or only looks into them in the most superficial manner; so that, besides knowing nothing of the external evidence, he has no perception of that internal evidence, which could not fail to strike a diligent and impartial reader.

The only *unbeliever* who appears to me to have had any idea of the true state of the question between believers and unbelievers, is Mr. Gibbon. Being acquainted with history, he saw no reason to entertain any doubt with respect to the circumstances in which Christianity is said to have been promulgated in the *Gospels* and the *Acts of the Apostles*, and consequently, the rapidity with which it spread through the most distant provinces of the *Roman* empire. He could not deny the remarkable fact, that a few unlearned men, of a despised nation, conceived such ideas respecting the enlightening and reforming of the world, as had never occurred to the greatest philosophers of the most celebrated nations, and that they succeeded in the bold design, having propagated the new religion with unexampled success in the learned and civilized, as well as the unlearned and uncivilized parts of the world, and this, notwithstanding the greatest sufferings to which they and their followers were universally exposed; so that there could not have been wanting any motive to the most rigorous examination of the facts on which it was founded, and while they were all recent. He therefore thought it necessary to give his ideas of the causes of this wonderful event. For he could not but be sensible, that every effect requires an adequate cause. But the lameness of his account betrays the most extreme prejudice, amounting to a total incapacity of forming a right judgment in the case.

Mr. Gibbon with great seriousness ascribes the rapid spread of Christianity chiefly to the zeal of its advocates, the strictness of their discipline, and the promises of happiness in another world, which the new religion held out to men.* But this is no more than, with the *Indian*, placing the world upon the elephant, without knowing that the elephant was supported by the tortoise. For he gives no account at all of the cause of the great zeal of the primitive Christians, of the strictness of their discipline, or how so many persons were induced to believe these flattering promises of future happiness, so as to live and die in the firm belief of it.† Consequently, the great difficulty of the ready reception of the gospel, and the rapid spread of Christianity, without being supported by miracles, remains just as he found it, that is, wholly unaccounted for. The gospel history clearly accounts for every thing that took place. But if that history be false, if no miracles were ever wrought, the *belief* of those miracles, by persons so indisposed to the reception of Christianity as both the *Jews* and *Gentiles* of that age evidently were, was absolutely impossible, on any known principles of human nature. Consequently, a much greater miracle is in reality admitted by unbelievers, than any that the gospel history supposes, and a miracle without any rational object whatever.

It is common with many *unbelievers* to say, that such is the power of *priests*, that they can impose any religion on the *vulgar*, and that to such influence may be ascribed the belief of the *Jewish* and *Christian* miracles. As I have much to observe on this subject, I shall consider it in a separate Section.

To me there cannot be any clearer proof of the insufficiency of the grounds on which the generality of *unbelievers* reject Christianity, than the extraordinary impression that has been made, especially in *America*, by Mr. Paine's *Age of Reason*. If I be rightly informed, this work has done much towards unchristianizing a great part of the nominally Christian world. For there is not, perhaps, as I think I have shewn in my remarks upon it, any book of the kind which abounds with more palpable mistakes with respect to notorious facts, or with reasoning more manifestly inconclusive. At the same time, such rational and excellent defences of Christianity as that of Mr. Paley's, to say nothing of other publications that have the same object, are

* See Vol. IV. p. 535, Note †.

† See Vol. V. pp. 482, 488.

comparatively read by very few, and serve only, (which is all that I expect from this performance,) to confirm the faith of some Christians, without bringing back any that have once declared their disbelief of Christianity.

SECTION VI.

Of the Influence of the Jewish and Christian Priests with respect to their Power of imposing upon the common People.

WHEN unbelievers in revelation are asked how the *Jews* and *Christians* were brought to believe the miracles of *Moses* and of *Christ*, if no such miracles were wrought, they frequently say, that it is in the power of *priests* to make the common people believe any thing, and that we see this in all countries, and in all ages. But this assertion, besides being too general, does not at all apply to the case of *Jewish* or *Christian* priests.

In all the cases in which priests have had the most influence, and seem to have led the common people, the people were previously disposed to believe what they were taught by them; the superstitions to which they were addicted, (arising from an ignorance of the laws of nature,) having been common to the whole nation, the priests as well as the people themselves. All the *Heathen* religions existed, as far as appears, before any particular institution of a priesthood to administer the rites of them. The priests of *Greece* and *Rome*, of whose functions and powers we have the most knowledge, were in no important respect wiser than the rest of the people; nor indeed were their offices distinct from, or incompatible with, civil offices; *Julius Cæsar* and *Agricola* were priests, and *Cicero* an augur. What knowledge, then, could there have been peculiar to the priests, of which they could have availed themselves to impose upon the rest of the people, if they had had any interest distinct from theirs?

It appears from *Herodotus* that in the early ages, princes, priests, and people were alike ignorant and superstitious; and when the light of philosophy beamed upon *Greece* and *Rome*, the newly-acquired knowledge was by no means peculiar to priests, or gave them any umbrage, as if any secrets they had were in great danger from it. Some of the wisest and most learned of the ancients were as much

devoted to the popular superstitions as the vulgar. This was evidently the case with the emperors *Marcus Aurelius*,* and *Julian*.†

If we attend to the circumstances of barbarous nations, such as the *Tartars* or *North-American Indians*, we shall not find their priests in possession of any more real knowledge than the people. They are equally ignorant and superstitious, firmly believing in the efficacy of their various charms, and other ceremonies. Or, if they have recourse to any artifice, it is, there is reason to think, only to obtain greater credit to what they believe to be fundamentally entitled to it; and from this use of artifice too few persons of any country or of any religion, have had the just firmness entirely to abstain. More, I doubt not, of the tricks of the *Romish* priests and monks were the contrivance of sincere *believers*, than of *unbelievers*.

The common people are said to be credulous, and accordingly easily imposed upon. But this is only true in cases in which they are, from their prejudices, previously disposed to credulity. For, where the things that are endeavoured to be imposed upon them are contrary to their preconceived prejudices and habits, they are always incredulous and obstinate in proportion to their ignorance; and accordingly, they have always been the last persons in every country to adopt any new opinion or practice. This was particularly evident in the progress of Christianity; for the people of the villages were so much later than others in abandoning their ancient superstitions, that the term *Pagans* (*Pagani*) became synonymous to *Heathens*; the inhabitants of the cities, better informed, and more open to conviction, having changed their opinions and customs long before them.‡

With respect to the *Jewish* and *Christian* religions, it was absolutely impossible that their establishment could have received the least aid from *priestcraft*, since they were established before any such order of men as priests existed; and besides, in both the cases, the prejudices of the people at large were directly opposed to them. The splendid miracles wrought in *Egypt*, the passage through the *Red Sea*, and the delivery of the ten commandments from *Mount Sinai*, preceded any appointment of priesthood among the Jews; and the posterity of *Moses*, who was the principal instrument in all the religious institutions of

* See Vol. IX. pp. 122, 123.

† See *ibid.* p. 397.

‡ See *ibid.* p. 280.

the *Hebrews*, were not priests, but were included in the class of common Levites. Besides, what knowledge had *Moses* or *Aaron* more than the other chiefs of the nation, and how could it have been in their power to make that refractory people receive a system of religion which they evidently did not like, and to believe things to be true, the falsehood of which, if they were false, they must themselves have been witnesses to? The rebellion against *Moses* and *Aaron* demonstrates that the rest of the people were not previously disposed to respect them, any more than the miracles wrought in their favour compelled them to do it.

That the great mass of the *Hebrew* nation were exceedingly indisposed to the religious institutions of *Moses*, and that they preferred the rites of the neighbouring nations, is evident from the whole of their history, till the time of the *Babylonish* Captivity. When *Moses* only stayed longer on *Mount Sinai* than they expected, they made the figure of a calf, after the manner of the *Egyptians*, for the object of their worship, though they had just before been expressly forbidden to do any such thing; and their relapses into the idolatrous rites of their neighbours, notwithstanding repeated judgments calculated to wean them from them, continued till the period above-mentioned.

The priests of *Baal*, not those of *Jehovah*, had the advantage of the prejudices of the people in their favour; and in several reigns the authority of the kings and of the nobles was added to it. In the reign of *Manasseh* the worship of *Baal* was set up in the Temple itself. How, then, could it have been in the power of the few and persecuted prophets of *Jehovah* to supplant them, and re-establish a mode of worship to which the generality of the people were so extremely averse, but by the power of miracles? If there be any fact in history more clearly established than any other, it is this, of the proneness of the *Hebrew* nation to the idolatrous rites of their neighbours; and yet, after their captivity in *Babylon*, when they saw the complete overthrow of that state, which was more addicted to idol-worship than any other in the whole world, and the fulfilment of the prophecies of *Moses* and *Jeremiah*, both in their own punishment and in their deliverance, they reverted to the observance of their religion, when it was most natural to expect they would entirely have abandoned and forgotten it; and they have not swerved from the firmest attachment to it to this day.

All the knowledge of which the *Jewish* priests were possessed was contained in the books of their law, which were

equally open to all the people, and which were recited to them every seventh year at the Feast of Tabernacles. In the *Heathen* religions there were *mysteries* and *secrets*, but in that of the *Jews* there were none.

Had the *Jewish* priests been a body of men, who, like the *Jesuits*, filled up the vacancies of their own corps, there might have been a succession of able men among them, capable of imposing upon, and leading the common people; but as the Jewish priesthood was hereditary, and ability is not so, many of them must have been weak men, who would probably have divulged any secrets, if there had been any in the order.

Besides, in times of degeneracy, many of the Jewish priests, as well as of the people, apostatized to the worship of other gods; and the prophets denounced the heaviest judgments against them on that account, so that they had every motive to expose a fraud, if they had known of any; but nothing of this kind appears, any more than in the case of *Judas* with respect to *Christ*. Notwithstanding the frequent apostacies of the bulk of the *Hebrew* nation (in which princes, priests, and people, were equally involved) from the worship of their own God, it by no means appears that they at any time disbelieved the miracles recorded in the books of *Moses*; but, like all other people in those times, they were willing to believe that the claims of different deities were not wholly incompatible with each other, and the religious festivals and rites of their neighbours were far more alluring than their own. And how common is it for men's practice, and even their reason, to bend to the side of inclination!

With less pretence can it be said that *priestcraft* was concerned in the promulgation of Christianity. That the Jews in general were indisposed to receive the new religion, can never be questioned. We see the most inveterate prejudice against it in that nation to this day; and what advantage could such a man as an illiterate carpenter and a few fishermen have over the Jewish scribes and priests? Neither *Jesus* nor the apostles were priests, or possessed of any more knowledge than other persons of their low station in their country. Indeed, no case can be stated in which men had less natural advantage for imposing upon others than they had.

The truth of Christianity being once established by unquestionable miracles, and such a rigorous scrutiny of all the facts on which it rested, as no other facts ever under-

went, and an order of priesthood being founded upon it, worldly-minded men, becoming priests, took advantage, no doubt, of the popular credulity to promote their own interest. But this was long after the establishment of Christianity, and therefore is to be ascribed to the *abuses* of it, and not to the thing itself, the true principles of which may be seen in the *New Testament*; and it is evident they afford no just ground for any such abuses, the whole object of Christianity being to train men up to virtue here, and happiness hereafter. Nothing is easier than to trace the rise and progress of the influence of priests among Christians, and the whole of it was unquestionably subsequent to the promulgation of Christianity; so that to ascribe the establishment of this religion to priestcraft, is to mistake the effect, and an accidental and late effect, for the cause.

SECTION VII.

Of the Spirit and Moral Influence of Infidelity, as exemplified in the Correspondence between Voltaire and D' Alembert.

THE great end of religion is to improve the nature of man, and thereby add to his happiness. With respect to *intellect*, men and brute animals are born in the same state, having the same external senses, which are the only inlets to all ideas, and consequently, the source of all the knowledge, and of all the mental habits they ever acquire; and for some time the brute advances with more rapidity than the man. A dog acquires much useful knowledge in a short time, while a child seems to have learned nothing; and yet, after a few years, how much superior is the child, while the dog makes no sensible advances at all?

To what can this difference be owing, but to a difference with respect to the various associations of the ideas, originally the very same, by which those in the mind of the man become so modified, as to be properly termed *intellectual*, while those of the other remain almost wholly sensual, the gratification of the senses being their principal object; whereas in some men of highly cultivated minds, they almost cease to be any object at all; there being no pains of sense, as those of hunger and thirst, those occasioned by heat or cold, by the most extreme fatigue, or whatever can affect the body in the most disagreeable manner, that they will

not cheerfully undergo, and for a great length of time, in order to gain some object of which a mere brute has no conception, and of which the man himself had no idea when he began his career. He shall even wholly lose sight of himself and of his individual interest of every kind, and pursue an object that has little or no relation to his own happiness (though it may be ultimately productive of it,) and the happiness of others shall be more directly in his view than his own.

Men also have many ideas which are so remote from those of sense, that it is with great difficulty that they can be traced to them; so that their real origin was unknown till it was discovered by the wonderful sagacity of Dr. Hartley; while other metaphysicians and philosophers maintain that we do not acquire them by any of the external, but by some internal senses. I mean those ideas which are called *abstract*.*

That brute animals are, however, capable of much mental improvement, we see in the strong attachment they have for their young, and the affection that dogs, more especially, have for their masters. But they do not seem capable of acquiring any ideas of invisible objects, or of very abstract or complex ideas;† owing, probably, to their want of the power of articulation or speech. They can express their *sensations*, their joys and sorrows, their hopes and fears, in the clearest manner; but they do not seem to have any mode of expressing *particular ideas*, and therefore they are incapable of discoursing by words or signs, and this is the great instrument of improvement in man, as well as more compass of brain.‡

* See Vol. III. pp. 189—196.

† That brute animals have some ideas that are properly *abstract*, or *general*, (if they can be called *ideas*,) and not corresponding to any individual object which they have seen before, is evident from dogs pursuing hares, and other animals of the same species, or of similar species with those that they have been used to pursue, and their avoiding others, which they have found by experience to be able to overpower, and disposed to hurt them. (*P.*)

‡ “The beasts,” says *Layton*, “have all the same senses with those of men, and can make as accurate and beneficial use of them.—And for proof that beasts have phantasies, their dreams are evidence.—And there seems to be no sufficient doubt of finding all other powers that are in man, resident in some beasts, except that of his intellect, which he can employ in framing many notions or propositions, and drawing consequences and conclusions; such we do not know that any beasts can do, nor have they any means of making them known to us.

“From the docility of beasts, we may with some certainty collect, that they have an intellect of simple or single notions, what and when and how their directors will have them to act. And hares and foxes do, it seems, invent means to deceive and baffle their pursuers. But of complex notions, discourse, or reasoning in their minds, we do not perceive that any beasts are capable.”

Layton concludes that “the copiousness and fineness of matter in the head and brain of man, and the largeness and aptitude of the organs, create the difference,

On this account it does not seem possible to give a brute animal an idea of a God, or of a future state, which are as easily acquired by children, and even by children that can speak, as any other ideas whatever. And in proportion to the number and variety of our ideas, and their combinations, and consequently their remoteness from the elements of which they were composed, is our advancement in intellectual excellence: for in this proportion we recede the farther from mere sense. According to the principles of Dr. Hartley, deduced from the most accurate observations, the *ultimatum* of human attainment in this progress, through the successive stages of *sensation, imagination, ambition, and self-interest*, the supposed *will of God*, and a sense of abstract *right*, commonly called *conscience*, or *the moral sense*, shall instantly, and without reflection, determine a man's conduct; so that his actions proceeding from these principles, shall be *secondarily automatic*. So perfectly will they be directed to these ends, that all the intermediate links of their connexion with them shall be obliterated, as the scaffolding is taken down when the edifice is completed.

With these principles every real philosopher is well acquainted, and therefore they must be here taken for granted, and by these we must compare the state of mind naturally acquired by the believer in revelation, with that of those who disbelieve it. And I think the great superiority of the former to the latter cannot fail to be manifest, as also that men are happier in themselves, and more disposed to promote the happiness of others, in proportion as they are governed by this faith. On the other hand, the minds and characters of those persons who are destitute of it, whatever other objects they may have, and whatever success they may have in the pursuit of them, will appear to be justly denominated *low* and *mean*, the reverse of what is *great, dignified, and noble*, in the character of rational beings.

This I have shewn, and I hope, satisfactorily, in the first of my "Discourses on the Evidences of Revealed Religion,"* and in some measure in a preceding Section,† and therefore I shall not repeat the arguments here; but I shall illustrate them by examples from such of the writings of the more eminent *unbelievers*, as will be deemed to be the fairest indication of their real sentiments and

and give the superior quality and advantage to the intellect of man." *Search after Souls*, 1691, pp. 28—30. See *ibid.* p. 40; Vol. III. pp. 21, 22, 56, 144; *Hartley*, (Pt. i. *Prop.* xciii.,) l. pp. 404—415.

* See Vol. XV. pp. 200—206.

† See *supra*, pp. 35, 36.

feelings. And I think with respect to *Voltaire*, who is the father of the greatest part of the infidelity of the present age,* we cannot fail to find these in his correspondence with *D'Alembert*, to whom he wrote without the least disguise, as to a brother and a friend; as *D'Alembert*, a man of a similar turn, though a somewhat graver character, did to him. On any sentiments in the other correspondences of these celebrated writers, I do not lay much stress, as they may be supposed to have had motives to write otherwise than they really thought, and it will appear that they made no scruple of doing this when it answered their purpose.

We see in these letters that it was the great object of *Voltaire*, from early life, and continued to be so with unabated, nay with increasing zeal, to the very end of it, to overturn the system of revealed religion, and without substituting, like the Deists in England, any principles of natural religion in its place. He was perpetually boasting of the progress that was made in this work. He felt deeply every thing that tended to obstruct it; he was continually urging his friends to join him in it; and he spared no means short of suffering and dying in the cause, to promote it. But he made no scruple of dissembling, or of using any artifice, to avoid persecution. He never, however, endeavoured to overturn the *Jewish* or *Christian* revelation by serious argument, but chiefly used and recommended ridicule. Though the subject be of infinite importance, and though he evidently did not suppose that there was any foundation for the hope of a future life but on the principles of Christianity, he always treated it with the greatest levity, never once expressing any regret or concern that so glorious a prospect must be abandoned; and though he was not, like *D'Alembert*, wholly an *unbeliever* in the being of a God, he had no faith in a Providence, nor professed to have any respect to a Supreme Being, in his conduct. Despairing of much success, except with men of letters, and men of fashion, he discovers the greatest indifference, and even contempt, for the common people, as not worth enlightening.

That these are just inferences, from the *Correspondence* above-mentioned, will appear from the extracts that I shall

* He is called by the king of Prussia, whose compliments, in his correspondence with him, are fulsome in the extreme, "the divine patriarch of unbelievers." (*Post. Works*, X. p. 71.) That the one could offer, and the other receive, such gross flattery, is a sufficient indication of the low state of both their minds. See particularly X. pp. 50, 60, 63, 65, 78, 108, 118. (*P.*)

give from it; and though they will be numerous, they will not, I think, be tedious, being written in *Voltaire's* best manner, which was always peculiarly lively and entertaining, even when his conceptions were ever so false, and the temper that he discovered, the most to be condemned.

I wish the disposition of mind with which *Voltaire* and his correspondent wrote, may be compared with that of the apostle *Paul* and other preachers of Christianity. These, having the highest idea of the importance of their office, and the greatest compassion and respect for mankind, all of whom they considered as children of the same God and Father with themselves, and heirs of the same immortality, and whom they saw to be miserably bewildered in error and superstition, spared no pains, and declined no risk or suffering, even that of death itself, in order to enlighten their minds, and reform their conduct, with a view to their future happiness. Justly estimating the importance of a future and endless state of being, they treated so serious a subject with the greatest seriousness. Firmly believing in the existence and constant providence of God, whom they considered as a Being of infinite power, wisdom and goodness, they had a respect to him in all their conduct, and were wholly resigned to his will, in living, suffering and dying. If any person be insensible of the great superiority of this character to that which is discovered by *Voltaire* and most *unbelievers*, I can have no hope that any reasoning or representations of mine will make the impression that I could wish, and therefore to all such persons my writing will be in vain.

It is remarkable, that, through the whole of this correspondence, both *Voltaire* and *D'Alembert* confound Popery with Christianity; though it appears that they had heard of *Socinians*,* and, no doubt, of other Christians, who dis-

* *Voltaire*, as early as 1728 (Vol. V. p. 338, Note †). See his *Lettres sur les Anglois*, (Let. vii., *Sur les Sociniens, ou Ariens, ou Antitrinitaires*), Amst. 1736, pp. 43—47.

Speaking of the revival of *Arianism* in England, *Voltaire* says, "Le grand M. Newton faisoit à cette opinion l'honneur de la favoriser. Ce Philosophe pensoit que les Unitaires raisoient plus géométriquement que nous. Mais le plus ferme patron de la doctrine Arienne, est l'illustre Docteur Clarke." Of his *Scripture Doctrine*, he adds, "Ce livre du Docteur lui a attiré beaucoup de partisans; mais l'a empêché d'être Archevêque de Cantorbéry. Je crois que le Docteur s'est trompé dans son calcul, et qu'il valoit mieux être Primat Orthodoxe d'Angleterre que Curé Arien." *Ibid.* pp. 45, 56.

D'Alembert frequently mentions *Socinians* in the *Correspondence*. In his *Description Abrégée du Gouvernement de Genève* he thus connects *Socinianism* with his account of the religion professed in that city:

"Le clergé de Genève a de mœurs exemplaires.—Plusieurs ne croient plus la

claimed the Popish doctrines. D'Alembert says,* "In a little time mankind will have sense enough to comprehend of themselves, that *three* are not *one*, and that *bread* is not a *God*."† Surely it became these *philosophers*, as they always exclusively call themselves and their friends, to have examined a little farther, and to have inquired whether all the absurdities, and all the evils, which they lay to the charge of Christianity, really belong to *it*, and not rather to the corruptions and abuses of it. But these things they perpetually confound, and on this pretence exclaim against the whole system.

Condorcet, in his *Life of Voltaire*, says, "His zeal against a religion which he regarded as the cause of the fanaticism which had desolated Europe, from its rise, of the superstition which had brutalized it, and as a source of the evils which those enemies to humanity continued still to occasion, seemed to double his activity and his strength. 'I am tired,' said he, one day, 'with hearing it repeated that twelve men were sufficient to establish Christianity, and I am desirous of shewing them that one man only is wanting to destroy it.'"[‡]

According to the same testimony, *Voltaire's* zeal in the same cause had suffered no abatement when he visited Paris

divinité de Jésus Christ, dont Calvin, leur chef, étoit si zélé défenseur, et pour la quelle il fit brûler Servet.—Ce seroit, selon eux, faire insulte à la Divinité, d'imaginer que cet Etre plein de bonté et de justice, fût capable de punir nos fautes par une éternité de tourmens.—Ils croient donc qu'il y a des peines dans une autre vie, mais pour un temps. Pour tout dire en un mot, plusieurs pasteurs de Genève n'ont d'autre religion qu'un Socinianisme parfait.

"On se plaint moins à Genève qu'ailleurs des progrès de l'incrédulité, ce qui ne doit pas surprendre: la religion y est presque réduite à l'adoration d'un seul Dieu, du moins chez presque tout ce qui n'est pas peuple: le respect pour Jésus Christ et pour les Ecritures, est peut-être la seule chose qui distingue d'un pur Déisme le Christianisme de Genève." *Œuvres* (An. xii.), 1805, V. pp. 271—275. See *A Short Account of Geneva* in D'Alembert's *Miscellanies*, 1765, pp. 68—71.

* The quotations are from the edition of *Voltaire's Works*, published after his death, the edition in 12mo.; the volumes quoted being the three which contain his correspondence with D'Alembert. (P.) From the 12mo. edition of 1792, à Hambourg, Leipsic et Brunswick, in 100 volumes, entitled *Œuvres Complètes de Voltaire*, I shall quote the *original* passages, so far as I can ascertain them.

† *Corresp.* I. p. 212. (P.) "Encore un peu de temps, et je ne sais si tous ces livres seront nécessaires, et si le genre humain n'aura pas assez d'esprit pour comprendre par lui-même que trois ne font pas un, et que du pain n'est pas Dieu." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. xcix. 1762), p. 206.

‡ *Life*, p. 192. (P.) "Son zèle contre une religion qu'il regardait comme la cause du fanatisme qui avait désolé l'Europe, depuis sa naissance, de la superstition qui l'avait abrutic, et comme la source des maux que ces ennemis de l'humanité continuaient de faire encore, semblait doubler son activité et ses forces. 'Je suis las,' disait-il un jour, 'de leur entendre répéter que douze hommes ont suffi pour établir le Christianisme, et j'ai envie de leur prouver qu'il n'en faut qu'un pour le détruire.'" *Œuvres*, C. p. 119.

the last time, which was near his death. "In the midst of the acclamations of the theatre, he had observed, with secret pleasure, that the verses which were the most applauded were those in which he attacked superstition, and the names which it had consecrated. It was to this object that he referred all the homage that he received. He saw in the general admiration a proof of the empire which he had obtained over their minds, the fall of prejudice which was his work."*

But perhaps *Voltaire's* own language will give a clearer idea of the vehemence of his zeal against Christianity; and it is necessary to observe, that in this correspondence he does not always express himself in words at length, but, having once designated Christianity by the phrase *infamous fanaticism*, he generally only writes *l'inf*— for it. I therefore shall not scruple to translate it accordingly. Speaking of the opposition that was made by the clergy to the publication of the *L'Encyclopédie*, he says, "Let us only have the consolation of regarding with an excess of horror and of contempt, the contemptible and horrible rascals. I do not know whether I explain myself. I love you as much as I abhor them."† Again he says, "Hold this system in execration, and love me."‡ "Persecuting monsters, give me only seven or eight persons that I can command, and I will exterminate you!"§

* *Life* p. 192. (P.) "Au milieu des acclamations du théâtre, il avait observé avec un plaisir secret que les vers les plus applaudis étaient ceux où il attaquait la superstition et les noms qu'elle a consacrés. C'était vers cet objet qu'il rapportait tout ce qu'il recevait d'hommages. Il voyait, dans l'admiration générale, la preuve de l'empire qu'il avait exercé sur les esprits, de la chute des préjugés qui était son ouvrage." *Œuvres*, C. p. 160.

At this period, the friend of *Price* and *Priestley* solicited and obtained for his grandson, the *blessing of Voltaire*, as *Condorcet* thus describes the interview:

"*Franklin* s'empessa de voir un homme dont la gloire occupait depuis longtemps les deux mondes: *Voltaire*, quoiqu'il eût perdu l'habitude de parler Anglais, essaya de soutenir la conversation dans cette langue, puis bientôt reprenant la sienne: 'Je n'ai pu résister au désir de parler un moment la langue de M. *Franklin*.'

"Le philosophe Américain lui présenta son petit-fils en demandant pour lui sa bénédiction: *God and Liberty*, dit *Voltaire*, 'voilà la seule bénédiction qui convienne au petit-fils de M. *Franklin*.'" *Ibid.* pp. 160, 161. See *Ann. Reg.* (1778), XXI. p. 2.

† *Corresp.* II. p. 213. (P.) "Ayons seulement la consolation de voir, avec l'excès de l'horreur et du mépris, de méprisables et d'horribles coquins. Je ne sais si je m'explique. Je vous aime autant que je les abhorre." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxxxviii. 1768), p. 168.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 68. (P.) "Ayez l'*inf*.. en exécration, et aimez moi." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xxviii. 1765), p. 54.

§ *Corresp.* I. p. 111. (P.) "Monstres persécuteurs, qu'on me donne seulement sept ou huit personnes que je puisse conduire, et je vous exterminerai." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xliv. 1766), p. 88.

It was the subject of great concern to *Voltaire*, that the enemies of religion could not agree to act together. " 'Tis pity," he says, " that there should be discord in the camp of philosophy, when it is on the point of taking Troy. Let us at least have nothing to reproach ourselves with, that can hurt the common cause."*

Voltaire had the greatest contempt imaginable for *Rousseau*; saying, " he did not know a more contemptible mountebank than he was, and that he would not spare him, but humble the pride of that *Diogenes*."† Yet thinking he might be of some service to the common cause, he says, " It is pity that *Jean Jacques*, *Diderot*, *Helvetius*, and yourself, with others *ejusdem farinae*, cannot act together, to crush superstition. The greatest of my griefs is to see imposture united, and the friends of truth divided. Fight, my dear *Bellerophon*, and destroy the chimera."‡ Again, mentioning *Rousseau*, he says, " This is prodigiously ridiculous; so are most things in this world. But I overlook every thing, provided the infamous superstition be cried down, as it ought to be, by all persons of condition, and that it be abandoned to footmen and servant girls, as it ought to be."§

D'Alembert had pleaded for *Rousseau*, as having merit in this way, though justly censurable in other respects. " If *Rousseau*," he says, " is persecuted, it is for having thrown some stones, and very good ones, at the infamous fanaticism which you wish to have crushed, and which is the burden of the song in all your letters, as the destruction of *Carthage* was of all the speeches of *Cato* in the Roman senate."||

* *Corresp.* II. p. 14. (P.) " Il est bien fâcheux que la discorde soit au camp de la philosophie, lorsqu'elle est au moment de prendre Troye. Tâchons du moins de n'avoir rien à nous reprocher de ce qui peut nuire à la cause commune." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. v. 1765), p. 12.

† *Corresp.* II. p. 316. (P.) " Je réprimerai l'orgueil de *Diogène* (*Jean-Jacques*). Je ne connais point de plus méprisable charlatan." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. cxxxi. 1770), p. 246.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 16. (P.) " C'est bien dommage, encore une fois, que *Jean-Jacques*, *Diderot*, *Helvétius* et vous cum aliis ejusdem farinae hominibus, vous ne vous soyez pas entendus pour écraser l'inf... Le plus grand de mes chagrins est de voir les imposteurs unis et les amis du vrai divisés. Combattez, mon cher *Bellerophon*, et détruisez la chimère." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. vi. 1765), pp 13, 14.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 9. (P.) " Tout cela est d'un prodigieux ridicule, ainsi que la plupart des choses de ce monde; mais je pardonne tout, pourvu que l'infame superstition soit décriée comme il faut chez les honnêtes gens, et qu'elle soit abandonnée aux laquais et aux servantes, comme de raison." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. ii. 1765), p. 8.

|| *Corresp.* I. p. 174. (P.) " Si *Rousseau* est persécuté, c'est d'avoir jeté des pierres, et d'assez bonnes pierres, à cet infame fanatisme que vous voudriez voir écrasé, et qui fait le refrain de toutes vos lettres, comme la destruction de *Carthage* était le refrain de tous les discours de *Caton* au sénat." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. ciii. 1762), p. 223.

Voltaire was continually exhorting his friends to exert themselves, in every possible way, to overturn Christianity. "By what fate is it," he says, "that so many fanatical madmen have founded sects, and so many superior spirits can scarce found a small school of reason? It is, perhaps, because they are not mad. They want enthusiasm and activity. All the philosophers are too lukewarm; they content themselves with laughing at the errors of men, when they ought to crush them. Missionaries traverse land and sea, philosophers might at least go over the streets. They must sow the good seed from house to house. Preaching does more than the writings of the fathers. Acquit yourself, dear brother, of both these duties. Preach and write, combat, convert, make the fanatics so odious and contemptible, that the government shall be ashamed to support them."*

He particularly laments the inactivity of his correspondent, *D' Alembert*, and urges him to exert his great talents, especially in irony, in the cause. "You bury your talents," he says, "you are content with despising the monster which you ought to abhor and destroy. What would it cost you to crush it in four pages, having the modesty too not to let it know that it died by your hand? It belongs to *Meleager* to kill the wild boar. Throw the javelin, without shewing the hand. Some time or other do me this pleasure. Comfort me in my old age.† Defend the good cause, *pugnis, unguibus et rostro*. Animate the brethren. Continue to coax the fools and the knaves."‡ "One hand like yours might serve to crush the monsters of superstition and fana-

* *Corresp.* II. p. 28. (P.) "Par quelle fatalité se peut-il que tant de fanatiques imbécilles aient fondé des sectes de fous, et que tant d'esprits supérieurs puissent à peine venir à bout de fonder une petite école de raison? C'est peut-être parce qu'ils sont sages; il leur manque l'enthousiasme, l'activité. Tous les philosophes sont trop tièdes; ils se contentent de rire des erreurs des hommes, au lieu de les écraser. Les missionnaires courent la terre et les mers, il faut au moins que les philosophes courent les rues; il faut qu'ils aillent semer le bon grain de maisons en maisons. On réussit encore plus par la prédication que par les écrits des pères. Acquittez-vous de ces deux grands devoirs, mon cher frère; prêchez et écrivez, combattez, convertissez, rendez les fanatiques si odieux et si méprisables, que le gouvernement soit honteux de les soutenir." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xxxvi. 1766), p. 70.

† *Corresp.* I. p. 331. (P.) "Vous enfouissez vos talens; vous vous contentez de mépriser un monstre qu'il faut abhorrer et détruire. Que vous coûterait-il de l'écraser en quatre pages, en ayant la modestie de lui laisser ignorer qu'il meurt de votre main? C'est à *Méléagre* à tuer le sanglier. Lancez la flèche sans montrer la main. Faites-moi quelque jour ce petit plaisir. Consolez-moi dans ma vieillesse." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxix. 1763), p. 269.

‡ *Corresp.* I. p. 334. (P.) "Défendez la bonne cause, *pugnis, unguibus et rostro*; animez les frères, continuez à larder de bons mots les sots et les fripons." *Œuvres*, XCVII (Let. cxix. 1763), p. 279.

ticism: and when we can render this service to mankind, without committing ourselves, I think we ought in conscience to do it. I ask this small service of you as a favour, and the rest as justice.”* “Men will get light, in spite of the tigers and the apes. You are not willing to be a martyr; but be a confessor. Your words will have more weight than a pile. My dear philosopher, constantly cry aloud like a devil. I love you as much as I hate those monsters.”† “Adieu, my dear illustrious master, continue to combat, as you do, *pro aris et focis*. As for me, I have my hands tied up by ministerial and sacerdotal despotism. I can only do like Moses, lift up my hands to heaven, while you are fighting.”‡ “They say we shall soon have many curious things, which will do much good, in which all men of letters will be interested. You, my friend, who are at their head, pray to God that the devil may be crushed, and as far as prudence will permit, put your powerful hand to this holy work.”§

In proportion to *Voltaire's* great zeal in the cause of infidelity, was his joy in the success of his labours, of which he makes frequent boasts. “Reason,” he says, “makes great progress.”|| “You perceive that fanaticism foams with rage, in proportion as the day begins to shine.”¶ He particularly triumphs in the great progress infidelity had made of late years. “Philosophy has made a wonderful

* *Corresp.* I. p. 423. (P.) “Une main comme la vôtre doit servir à écraser les monstres de la superstition et du fanatisme; et quand on peut rendre ce service aux hommes sans se compromettre, je crois qu’on y est obligé en conscience. J’ose vous demander ce petit travail comme une grande grace, et je vous demande le reste comme une justice.” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxlvi. 1764), p. 342.

† *Corresp.* II. p. 179. (P.) “Les hommes s’éclaireront malgré les tigres et les singes. Vous ne voulez pas être martyr, mais soyez confesseur. Vos paroles feront plus d’effet qu’un bûcher. Mon cher philosophe, criez toujours comme un diable. Je vous aime autant que je hais ces monstres.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxxii. 1767), p. 142.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 233. (P.) “Adieu, mon cher et illustre confrère; continuez à combattre, comme vous faites, *pro aris et focis*. Pour moi, qui ai les mains liées par le despotisme ministériel et sacerdotal, je ne puis que faire comme *Moïse*, les lever au ciel pendant que vous combattez.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xcvii. 1769), p. 183.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 238. (P.) “On dit que nous aurons bientôt des choses très-curieuses qui pourront faire beaucoup de bien, et auxquelles il faudra que tous les gens de lettres s’intéressent; j’entends les gens de lettres qui méritent ce nom. Vous qui êtes à leur tête, mon cher ami, priez Dieu que le diable soit écrasé, et mettez, autant que la prudence le permet, votre puissante main à ce très-saint œuvre.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xcix. 1769), pp. 187, 188.

|| *Corresp.* I. p. 315. (P.) “La raison va grand train.” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxiv. 1763), p. 256.

¶ *Corresp.* II. p. 67. (P.) “Vous sentez bien que le fanatisme écume de rage, à mesure que le jour commence à luire.” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. xxviii. 1765), p. 53.

progress the last five or six years.”* “It must be confessed that reason has made terrible progress in the last thirty years. It will do so every day.”† This was written in 1765.

He and his correspondent congratulate one another on the number of *books* which served to promote the cause they had so much at heart. “They rain upon us,” says *D’Alembert*, “from Holland with works without number, against fanaticism. They seem resolved to besiege the city in form, so many red-hot balls are thrown into it.”‡ “There are more than thirty publications in the last two years, which are dispersed through all Europe.”§ “It continues to rain, as if it would pour in books against the priesthood.”|| “We have had a number of good books the last thirty years,” says *Voltaire*; “they must do much good. The progress of reason is rapid in our cantons.”¶

He frequently mentions the particular countries and places in which infidelity made the greatest or the most unexpected progress. “You will find,” he says, “that Geneva makes great progress. There are more philosophers than Socinians in it.”** “Fanaticism begins to appear terrible from one end of Europe to the other. Imagine to yourself a Spanish nobleman, a stranger, writing to me a letter altogether anti-fanatical, to ask for arms against this monster, in spite of the holy brotherhood.”†† *D’Alembert*, writing to *Voltaire*, says, “There are compliments for you from the Queen of Sweden, and the prince royal, who protect, in the North, that philosophy which is so ill received by the princes of the South. Mr. Jennings [*Chamberlain* to the King] will tell you what

* *Corresp.* I. p. 313. (P.) “La philosophie a fait de si merveilleux progrès depuis cinq ou six ans.” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxiv. 1763), p. 254.

† *Corresp.* II. p. 12. (P.) “Il faut avouer, quoi qu’on en dise, que la raison a fait d’effrayants progrès depuis environ trente ans.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. iii. 1765), p. 10.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 171. (P.) “Il nous pleut ici d’Hollande des ouvrages sans nombre contre le fanatisme. Il semble qu’on ait résolu de faire le siège de l’infame dans les formes, tant on jette de boulets rouges dans la place.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxx. 1767), p. 136.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 176. (P.)

|| *Corresp.* II. p. 209. (P.) “La pluie des livres contre la prêtraille continue toujours à verse.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxxxvi. 1768), p. 164.

¶ *Corresp.* I. p. 376. (P.)

** *Corresp.* I. p. 325. (P.) “Vous trouverez que Genève a fait de grands progrès, et qu’il y a plus de philosophes que de Sociniens.” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxvii. 1763), p. 264.

†† *Corresp.* II. p. 22. (P.) “Le fanatisme commence à être en horreur, d’un bout de l’Europe à l’autre. Figurez-vous qu’un grand seigneur Espagnol, que je ne connais point, s’avise de m’écrire une lettre tout-à-fait antifaunique, pour me demander des armes contre ce monstre, en dépit de la sainte hermandad.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. ix. 1765), p. 18.

progress reason has made in Sweden, under these happy auspices.”*

These philosophers congratulate one another most of all, on the patronage that was given to infidelity by princes, from whose influence they promised themselves the greatest success. “I hope,” says *Voltaire*, “that these rascals of theologians will become so ridiculous, that they will not be able to do any hurt. Our Russian empress leads the way finely. Their last days are at hand in Poland. They are already come in Prussia and the North of Germany. The houses of Austria and Bavaria are almost the only ones that support these pedants.”† “There is,” he says, “something like a Decian persecution against our primitive church; but we have for us, the emperor of China, the empress Catherine II., the king of Prussia, the king of Denmark, the queen of Sweden and her son, many princes of the empire, and all England. God will have pity on his flock.”‡

Voltaire did not, however, expect that his philosophy would make much progress among the common people. But this he thought of little consequence, provided it was received by persons of the higher classes. “There are,” he says, “few persons who think. My old royal disciple says, there are not more than one in a thousand, which is nearly the proportion of good company. But there will be ten times as many in ten years more. A great revolution in the minds of men is announced every day.”§ “Let us bless this happy revolution which has taken place in the minds of all persons of condition within these fifteen or twenty years.

* *Corresp.* II. p. 232. (P.) “Il a des complimens à vous faire de la part de la reine de Suède et du prince royal, qui protègent dans le Nord la philosophie si mal accueillie par les princes du Midi. M. *Jennings* vous dira combien la raison fait de progrès en Suède, sous ces heureux auspices.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xcvii. 1769), p. 183.

† *Corresp.* II. p. 169. (P.) “J’espère que bientôt tous ces maraudeurs de théologiens seront si ridicules qu’ils ne pourront nuire. Notre impératrice Russe les mène grand train. Leur dernier jour approche en Pologne: il est tout arrivé en Prusse et dans l’Allemagne septentrionale. La maison d’Autriche et la Bavière sont les seules qui soutiennent encore ces pédans.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxi. 1767), p. 134.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 334. (P.) “Voici une petite persécution à la *Décian*, contre notre primitive église; mais nous avons pour nous l’empereur de la Chine, l’impératrice *Catherine* II., le roi de Prusse, le roi de Danemarck, la reine de Suède et son fils, beaucoup de princes de l’Empire, et toute l’Angleterre. Dieu aura toujours pitié de son troupeau.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. cxli. 1770), p. 259.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 28. (P.) “Il y a peu de ces êtres pensans. Mon ancien disciple couronné me mande qu’il n’y en a guère qu’un sur mille; c’est à peu-près le nombre de la bonne compagnie; et s’il y a actuellement un millièmme d’hommes de raisonnables, cela décuplera dans dix ans. Le monde se déniaise furieusement. Une grande révolution dans les esprits s’annonce de tous côtés.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xii. 1765), pp. 22, 23.

It has surpassed my hopes.”* “We approach the times in which men begin to be rational. But when I say *men*, I do not mean the populace (*canaille*) and the great chamber, or the assembly of the clergy, I mean the men who govern, and who are born to govern. I mean the men of letters who are worthy of the name.”†

On many occasions *Voltaire* expresses great contempt for the common people, as if it was of little consequence whether their minds were enlightened or not. Having said, as before, that the great revolution exceeded his hopes, he adds, “As to the commonalty, (*canaille*,) I do not trouble myself about them; they will always be the same. I cultivate my garden: there will always be toads; but they do not hinder the singing of my nightingales.”‡ Speaking of a third person, he says, “He ought to be content, and you too, with the contempt into which superstition is fallen with the people of condition, in Europe. It is all that could be wished, or that was necessary. We never pretended to enlighten cobblers and servant maids: that was the business of the apostles. It is true, there are people who risked martyrdom as they did, but God had pity upon them.”§ “We shall soon have *new heavens and a new earth*. I mean for people of condition. As for the populace, (*canaille*,) the most stupid heavens, and the most stupid earth, is all that is necessary for them.”|| “Adieu, my dear friend, I recommend to you to have courage, and much contempt for mankind.”¶ I make two classes of men—the oppressing,

* *Corresp.* II. p. 146. (P.) “Bénissons cette heureuse révolution qui s’est faite dans l’esprit de tous les honnêtes gens depuis quinze ou vingt années; elle a passé mes espérances.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lx. 1767), p. 116.

† *Corresp.* I. p. 343. (P.) “Nous touchons au temps où les hommes vont commencer à devenir raisonnables: quand je dis les hommes, je ne dis pas la populace, la grande chambre et l’assemblée du clergé, je dis les hommes qui gouvernent ou qui sont nés pour le gouvernement; je dis les gens de lettres dignes de ce nom.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. cxxii. 1763), pp. 278, 279.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 146. (P.) “A l’égard de la canaille, je ne m’en mêle pas; elle restera toujours canaille. Je cultive mon jardin, mais il faut bien qu’il y ait des crapauds; ils n’empêchent pas mes rossignols de chanter.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lx. 1767), p. 116.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 205. (P.) “Il doit être content, et vous aussi, du mépris où l’inf. est tombée chez tous les honnêtes gens de l’Europe. C’était tout ce qu’on voulait et tout ce qui était nécessaire. On n’a jamais prétendu éclairer les cordonniers et les servantes; c’est le partage des apôtres. Il est vrai qu’il y a des gens qui ont risqué le martyre comme eux; mais Dieu en a eu pitié.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxxxiv. 1768), pp. 161, 162.

|| *Corresp.* II. p. 231. (P.) “Nous aurons bientôt de nouveaux cieus et une nouvelle terre, j’entends pour les honnêtes gens; car, pour la canaille, le plus sot ciel et la plus sottie terre est ce qu’il lui faut.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xcvi. 1769), pp. 181, 182.

¶ *Corresp.* II. p. 362. (P.) “Adieu, mon cher ami; je vous recommande beaucoup de courage, et beaucoup de mépris pour le genre humain.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. clvi. 1771), p. 281.

and the oppressed. I hate the one, and I despise the other."*

The King of Prussia expresses the same contempt for the common people. "The vulgar," he says, "do not deserve to be enlightened."† "We must be content with thinking for ourselves, and give free scope to the ideas of the vulgar."‡ How much more sublimity, as well as benevolence, is there in the doctrine of the Scriptures, which represents all men as brethren, being equally the children of God, training up in the same school of moral discipline here, and alike heirs of immortality hereafter!

Notwithstanding these declarations of contempt for the common people, *Voltaire* would have been glad to have gained them to his party if he could; so that his conduct with respect to them resembles that of the fox with respect to the grapes. Speaking of the treatise called *Bons Sens*,§ (Good Sense,) he says, "I think as you do of it. It appears to me to be a more terrible book than the *Système de la Nature*.|| If it was abridged, as it will well bear to be, and sold for six *sous*, so as to be purchased and read by cooks, I do not know how the kitchens of the clergy would fare for it."¶

Zealous as *Voltaire* was in the cause of infidelity, he was not willing that he or his friends should suffer much for it. "The book ascribed to *Freret*," he says, "and which per-

* *Corresp.* II. p. 381. (P.)

† *Post. Works*, X. p. 4. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 63. (P.)

§ This is a treatise written in the most loose and declamatory manner, chiefly directed against the doctrines of Popery. In every other respect the contents correspond very little with the title. As to the proper evidence of Christianity, I do not know that this writer has advanced any thing more plausible than the following (pp. 134, 135): "The miracles of the apostles, if they had been wrought, must have procured them partisans enow to secure them from the ill treatment they met with. How can we believe that missionaries protected by God, and invested with his power, should not have worked a miracle so simple as that of withdrawing themselves from the cruelty of their persecutors. To say that God willed that his religion should be sealed with blood, is to say that God is a weak, an unjust, an ungrateful, or a sanguinary being, and that he unworthily sacrifices his missionaries to the views of his ambition." Surely it cannot be necessary, in this *Age of Reason*, to reply to such arguments as these. (P.)

|| Of which *D'Alambert* had said, "Je pense comme vous qu'il y a des longueurs, des répétitions, etc., mais que c'est un terrible livre; cependant je vous avoue que, sur l'existence de Dieu, l'auteur me paraît trop ferme et trop dogmatique, et je ne vois en cette matière que le scepticisme de raisonnable." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. cxxx. 1770), pp. 243, 244. See Vol. IV. pp. 382—389.

¶ *Corresp.* III. p. 147. (P.) "Je pense comme vous sur ce *Bon Sens* qui me paraît un bien plus terrible livre que le *Système de la Nature*. Si on abrégait encore ce livre (ce qu'on pourrait aisément, sans y faire tort) et qu'on le mît au point de ne coûter que dix sous, et de pouvoir être acheté et lu par les cuisinères, je ne sais comment s'en trouverait la cuisine du clergé." *Œuvres*, XCIX. (L. lxxii. 1775), p. 132

haps is his, does a prodigious deal of good ! There are many confessors ; but I hope there will be no martyrs.”* With respect to himself, he says, “ I love truth very much ; but I do not love martyrdom at all.”†

His correspondent has as little affection for martyrdom as his master, for so he always calls *Voltaire*. “ I am very willing,” he says, “ to serve the cause of Reason ; but I desire still more to be at my ease. Men are not worth the pains we take to enlighten them, and even those who think as we do, persecute us.”‡ “ As for me,” he says, “ I begin to be tired and ashamed of all that I hear said, that I see done, and that I have the misfortune to read. I should be tempted to say and do something too ; but I forbear to write for fear of being burned. Do you know that I should be afraid for you if you were at *Collioure* instead of *Ferney*, lest the holy brotherhood should carry you off against the law of nations, to burn you, according to the rules of the canon law ? Alas ! I laugh, though I have little desire to do it. I had better conclude as I should have begun, with saying nothing, but embracing you with grief and affection.”§

Voltaire more than once thought himself in danger, and he availed himself more of his address than of his courage, on these occasions. “ There is a brief of the Pope,” he says, “ in which I am evidently pointed at, so that I was at the same time in danger of a *lettre de cachet*, and of the greater excommunication. But what can calumny do against innocence ? Sometimes it can burn a person, you will say. Yes, there are examples of it in our holy religion ; but not having the vocation of a martyr, I have enrolled myself among the confessors.”||

* *Corresp.* II. p. 88. (P.)

† *Corresp.* III. p. 158. (P.) “ J' aime fort la vérité, mais je n' aime point du tout le martyre.” *Œuvres*, XCIX. (Let. lxxvii. 1776), p. 141.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 71. (P.)

§ *Corresp.* III. p. 201. (P.) “ Pour moi, je commence à être las et honteux de toutes celles que j' entends dire, que je vois faire, et que j' ai le malheur de lire. Je serais bien tenté d' en dire et d' en faire aussi quelques unes ; mais je m' abstiens d' être lu, de peur d' être brûlé. Savez-vous bien que je craindrais pour vous, si vous étiez à Collioure au lieu d' être à Ferney, que la sainte hermandad ne vous fit enlever contre le droit des gens, pour vous brûler suivant toutes les règles du droit canon ? Hélas ! je ris, et je n' en ai guère envie. Il vaut mieux finir par où j' aurais du commencer, par me taire et par vous embrasser avec douleur et tendresse.” *Œuvres*, XCIX. (Let. c. 1776), pp. 174, 175.

|| *Corresp.* II. pp. 236. (P.) “ Il y eut un bref du Pape dans lequel je suis très-clairement désigné, de sorte que je fus à la fois exposé à une lettre de cachet et à une excommunication majeure ; mais que peut la calomnie contre l' innocence ? La faire brûler quelquefois, me direz-vous ; oui, il y en a des exemples dans notre sainte religion : mais n' ayant pas la vocation du martyr, j' ai pris le parti de m' en tenir au rôle de confesseur.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xcix. 1769), p. 136.

He was more particularly alarmed when the *Philosophical Dictionary*, which he certainly wrote, was generally ascribed to him. The manner in which on this occasion he expressed himself to his friend is not a little remarkable. But it appears that he was apprehensive lest his letters should be intercepted. "It is true I have read this diabolical dictionary; it has frightened me, as it has done you. But my greatest affliction is, that there are Christians so unworthy of that glorious name as to suspect me to be the author of a work so antichristian."* "I conjure you to believe that I have had no hand in it."† "It neither serves me nor the cause of truth, to ascribe this work to me. I believe there are but few copies of this abominable alphabet in Paris, and that they are not in dangerous hands. But, when there shall be the least danger, I beg of you to inform me of it, that I may disclaim the work in all the public papers, with my usual candour and innocence."‡ "My dear and great philosopher, I conjure you to affirm on your share in Paradise that your brother has no hand in this dictionary, for he swears that he has not composed that infamous work, and he ought to be believed with respect to it, and the brethren must not be persecuted. It is not an infamous lie that I propose to my brother, but an officious clamour, the essential service of declaring that this work, which I disclaim, is not mine. It is to disarm the tongue of calumny, and the hand of persecution."§ "You ask me why I am so uneasy about a book in which I had no concern. It is because it is ascribed to me. It is because by order of the king, the procureur-general is actually preparing a requisitory. It is because at the age

* *Corresp.* I. p. 409. (P.) "Vraiment j'ai lu ce Dictionnaire diabolique, il m'a effrayé comme vous; mais le comble de mon affliction est qu'il y ait des Chrétiens assez indignes de ce beau nom pour me soupçonner d'être l'auteur d'un ouvrage aussi anti-chrétien." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxli. 1764), p. 331.

† *Corresp.* I. p. 411. (P.) "Je vous conjure de crier que je n'ai nulle part au *Portatif*." *Ibid.* p. 332.

‡ *Corresp.* I. p. 413. (P.) "On ne sert assurément ni la vérité ni moi, en m'attribuant cet ouvrage—Je crois qu'il y a dans Paris très peu d'exemplaires de cette abomination alphabétique, et qu'ils ne sont pas dans des mains dangereuses; mais dès qu'il y aura le moindre danger, je vous demande en grace de m'avertir, afin que je désavoue l'ouvrage dans tous les papiers publics, avec ma candeur et mon innocence ordinaires." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxlii. 1764), pp. 333, 334.

§ *Corresp.* I. p. 413. (P.) "Mon cher et grand philosophe, je vous conjure encore d'affirmer, sur votre part de paradis, que votre frère n'a nulle part au *Portatif*: car votre frère jure et ne parie pas que jamais il n'a composé cette infamie, et il faut l'en croire, et il ne faut pas que les frères soient persécutés. Ce n'est point le mensonge officieux que je propose à mon frère, c'est la clameur officieuse, le service essentiel de bien dire que ce livre renié par moi n'est point de moi; c'est de ne pas armer la langue de la calomnie et la main de la persécution." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxliii. 1764), p. 334.

of seventy-one, sick, and almost blind, I am about to suffer the most violent persecution; and lastly, because I am about to die a martyr for a book which I have not written.”*

His friend did not fail to second his views by boldly affirming what he, no doubt, believed to be false. “If,” he says, “it only depend upon declaring that the work is not yours, do not be uneasy. I answer for it, like *Crispin*, with as wide a mouth as you can desire. It is evident, as I have told you, that this production of darkness is the work of the devil in three persons, or of a person in three devils.”†

The manner in which Voltaire had the address to extricate himself, when threatened by the bishop of *Annecy*, who had been a mason, went afterwards into holy orders, and was gradually advanced to a bishopric, shews that he thought nothing unlawful or unworthy of him, in order to ensure his safety. “See, I pray you, a pious fraud. I receive in my bed the *viaticum* brought me by my curé, attended by the heads of my parish. I then declare, having God in my mouth, that the bishop of Annecy is a calumniator, and have it registered by a notary. On this my mason of Annecy is in a rage, threatening my good curé, my pious confessor and my notary. What do they? They assemble privately a fortnight after, and draw up an act in which they declare upon oath, that they heard me make a confession of my faith, not that of the vicar of Savoy, but that of all the curés in Savoy. It was in reality in the style of a clumsy chimney-sweeper. They send this writing to the mason, without saying any thing of it to me, and come afterwards to conjure me not to disown it. They agree to take a false oath to draw their necks out of the collar. I tell them they damn themselves. I give them something to drink, and they are satisfied.”‡

* *Corresp.* I. p. 426. (P.) “Vous me demandez pourquoi je m’inquiète tant sur un livre auquel je n’ai nulle part, c’est qu’on me l’attribue; c’est que, par ordre du roi, le procureur général prépare actuellement un réquisitoire; c’est qu’à l’âge de soixante et onze ans, malade et presque aveugle, je suis prêt à essayer la persécution la plus violente; c’est qu’enfin je ne veux pas mourir martyr d’un livre que je ne pas fait.” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxlvii. 1764), p. 344.

† *Corresp.* I. p. 419. (P.) “S’il ne tient qu’à crier que l’ouvrage n’est pas de vous, ne vous mettez pas en peine; je vous réponds, comme *Crispin*, d’une bouche aussi large qu’il est possible de le désirer. Il est évident, comme je vous l’ai dit, que cette production de ténèbres est l’ouvrage ou d’un diable en trois personnes, ou d’une personne en trois diables.” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxlv. 1764), p. 339.

‡ *Corresp.* II., p. 236. (P.) “Or, voyez, je vous prie, ce que c’est que les fraudes pieuses. Je reçois dans mon lit le saint viatique que m’apporte mon curé devant tous les coqs de ma paroisse; je déclare, ayant DIEU dans ma bouche, que l’évêque d’Annecy est un calomniateur, et j’en passe acte par-devant notaire; voilà

The better to screen himself from danger, Voltaire employed a Jesuit to say mass for him. "There are," he says, "eleven Jesuits at Marseilles, and one who says mass to me."* And when he was at the point of death he did not scruple to make a confession of the Catholic faith, which it had been the great business of his life to ridicule and explode. *Condorcet* says in his *Life*, that the Abbé Guathier received from him a confession of his faith, in which he declared that he died in the Catholic religion in which he was born.†

Artifice and concealment was the method which *Voltaire* and his friends, who disliked persecution, chose to make use of, in order to propagate their sentiments. One of these methods was to prefix false names to books. *Voltaire* mentions one, to which that of *Boulanger*, then dead, would be put.‡ Speaking of *Helvetius*, he says, "Did he not know that one may dispatch superstition without engraving one's name on the dagger with which it is killed?"§

Voltaire expresses peculiar satisfaction with a work of *D'Alembert's* written in this manner. "My dear philosopher, your work is like yourself, it is impossible not to find you out at the second page. You will have the pleasure, at the same time, of the most complete success, and that of denying that you have rendered the public this service, before knaves and fools, who do not deserve that you should take the trouble to laugh at them."||

mon maçon d'Annecy furieux, désespéré comme un damné, menaçant mon bon curé, mon pieux confesseur et mon notaire. Que font-ils ? Ils s'assemblent secrètement au bout de quinze jours, et ils dressent un acte dans lequel ils assurent par serment qu'ils m'ont entendu faire une profession de foi, non pas celle du *vicaire Savoyard*, mais celle de tous les curés de Savoie (elle est en effet du style d'un ramoneur). Ils envoient cet acte au maçon sans m'en rien dire, et viennent ensuite me conjurer de ne les point désavouer. Ils conviennent qu'ils ont fait un faux serment pour tirer leur épingle du jeu. Je leur remontre qu'ils se damnent, je leur donne pour boire, et ils sont contents." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xcix. 1769), p. 186.

* *Corres.* I. p. 313. (P.)

† *Life*, p. 198. (P.) "L'Abbé Gauthier confessa *Voltaire*, et reçut de lui une profession de foi par laquelle il déclarait qu'il mourait dans la religion catholique où il était né." *Œuvres*, C. p. 164.

‡ *Corresp.* I. p. 268. (P.) "On mettra le nom de feu, M. *Boulanger* à la tête de l'ouvrage." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xxxviii. 1765), p. 54.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 22. (P.) "Est-ce qu'il ne savait pas qu'on peut mettre l'*inf...* en pièces, sans graver son nom sur le poignard dont on la tue ?" *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. ix. 1765), p. 18.

|| *Corresp.* II. p. 20. (P.) "Mon cher philosophe—votre ouvrage est comme vous—it est impossible qu'on ne vous devine pas à la seconde page. Vous aurez à la fois le plaisir de jouir du succès le plus complet, et de nier que vous ayez rendu ce service au public, devant les fripons et les sots qui ne méritent pas même la peine que vous preniez de vous moquer d'eux." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. ix. 1765), p. 17.

D'Alembert entirely adopts his master's maxims on this subject, or rather was before him in them. "You are in the right, my dear master; people of condition can only combat by hiding themselves behind hedges; but thence they may fire with effect on the wild beasts that infest the country."* "You blame me for saying of *Bayle's* dictionary, It would have been well if he had more respected religion and morals. But in the cursed country in which we write, these phrases are things of course, and only serve as supports to the truths we wish to establish elsewhere. Nobody is deceived by them."†

They thought, by adopting these methods, they gained their point better than by more direct attacks upon religion, or than by persecution. "You reproach us," says *D'Alembert*, "with our indifference; but I think I told you that the fire of the faggots is very refreshing. Mankind are more enlightened because we have had the precaution or the good fortune to enlighten them by degrees."‡

Notwithstanding this language, which speaks much moderation, it is sufficiently evident from this correspondence, that neither *Voltaire* the master, nor *D'Alembert* the disciple, would have been much displeased if some mischief had befallen their enemies, and that it would have given them some pleasure to have promoted it. "There is," says *Voltaire*, "a friar who has a farm on my estate at *Tourney*. He comes hither sometimes. I promise myself the pleasure of putting him in the pillory as soon as I am well; a pleasantry which philosophers may take with such priests, without being persecutors, as they are."§

His correspondent shews the same disposition. For, after reading, and of course admiring *Voltaire's* letter relating to the *Servens*, who had been cruelly treated by the Catholic

* *Corresp.* II. p. 169. (P.) "Vous avez bien raison, mon cher maître; les honnêtes gens ne peuvent plus combattre qu'en se cachant derrière les haies; mais ils peuvent appliquer de là de bons coups de fusil contre les bêtes féroces qui infestent le pays." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxviii. 1767), p. 132.

† *Corresp.* I. p. 426. (P.) "Vous me faites une querelle de Suisse que vous êtes, au sujet du *Dictionnaire de Bayle*; premièrement, je n'ai point dit: *Heureux s'il eût plus respecté la religion et les mœurs!* ma phrase est beaucoup plus modeste; mais d'ailleurs qui ne sait que, dans le maudit pays où nous écrivons, ces sortes de phrases sont *style de notaire*, et ne servent que de passe-port aux vérités qu'on veut établir d'ailleurs? Personne au monde n'y est trompé." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxlv. 1764), p. 340.

‡ *Corresp.* I. p. 268. (P.) "Vous nous reprochez de la tiédeur; mais, je crois vous l'avoir déjà dit, la crainte des fagots est très-rafraichissante.—Le genre humain n'est aujourd'hui plus éclairé que parce qu'on a eu la précaution ou le bonheur de ne l'éclairer que peu à peu." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cii. 1762), pp. 218, 219.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 50. (P.)

priests, he says, "I shed tears over it ; I read it again and again, and concluded with wishing to see all the fanatics in the fire into which they wished to throw other people."* The king of Prussia, alluding probably to the same fact, says, in a letter to *Voltaire*, "I would make the tonsured executioners, who persecute you, disappear from the face of the earth, if it was in my power to effect it."†

This was not the sentiment of Christ, or the apostles. Jesus exhorted his disciples [*Matt. v. 44*] to *bless them that cursed them, and to pray for them that despitefully used them and persecuted them*. And Paul advised his converts [*Rom. xii. 17, 21*] not to *render evil for evil*, but to *overcome evil with good*.

Having reproached his adversaries with too much justice, as persecutors, *Voltaire* takes some pains to ward off a similar charge against his friends. "It is foolish," he says, "to say, that when the philosophers are in power, they will tolerate no religion but their own ; as if philosophers could ever persecute, or have it in their power to persecute. They will certainly not destroy the Christian religion, but Christianity will not destroy them. Their numbers will continually increase. The young persons destined to fill the chief places will be enlightened, religion will become less barbarous, and society more pleasant. They will prevent the priests from corrupting religion and morals. They will render the fanatics abominable, and the superstitious ridiculous. In one word, philosophy can only be of use to kings, to the law, and to the citizens."‡ Again he says, "I seriously lament the persecution which philosophers and philosophy are certainly going to experience. Have you not a sovereign contempt for your France, when you read the Greek and Roman histories ? Do you find a single man persecuted at Rome, from Romulus to Constantine, for his

* *Corresp. II. p. 23. (P.)* "On verse des larmes, et on la relit, et on en verse encore, et on finit par désirer de voir tous les fanatiques dans le feu où il voudraient jeter les autres." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. x. 1765), p. 19.

† *Posth. Works*, X. p. 69. (P.)

‡ *Corresp. I. p. 367. (P.)* "Il est bien fou et bien sot de dire, que quand ils y seront parvenus, ils ne toléreront plus d'autre religion que la leur ; comme si les philosophes pouvaient jamais persécuter, ou être à portée de persécuter. Ils ne détruiront certainement pas la religion Chrétienne, mais le Christianisme ne les détruira pas ; leur nombre augmentera toujours ; les jeunes gens destinés aux grandes places, s'éclaircissent avec eux, la religion deviendra moins barbare et la société plus douce. Ils empêcheront les prêtres de corrompre la raison et les mœurs. Ils rendront les fanatiques abominables, et les superstitieux ridicules. Les philosophes, en un mot, ne peuvent qu'être utiles aux rois, aux lois et aux citoyens." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxix. 1764), pp. 297, 298.

manner of thinking? Would the Senate have put a stop to the *Encyclopédie*?”*

A man must be little read in history, not to know that the Roman *Senate* and the Roman *people*, as well as the Roman *emperors*, were persecutors. It was not by the Heathen *populace* only, that the Christians suffered. The Roman *laws*, solemnly enacted by the Senate and people, forbade the exercise of all foreign religions; and it was for disobedience to these ancient laws, that *Nero*, *Trajan*, *Marcus Aurelius*, and other emperors, as well as *Decius* and *Dioclesian*, persecuted the Christians.†

As to the Heathen *philosophers*, they were so far from pleading in favour of toleration, that they were often the principal promoters of the persecutions.‡ No Heathen philosopher can be shewn to have been an advocate for toleration, till the empire became Christian. Then, indeed, *Libanius* advanced some liberal sentiments on the subject.§ But in this there could not be much merit, when, at that time, the Heathens themselves were at the mercy of the governing powers, and might be apprehensive of being exposed to that persecution by which they had made the Christians suffer for near three hundred years.

That such a degree of hatred as *Voltaire* and other *unbelievers* express against Christianity, as having, in their opinion, been the cause of the greatest mischiefs to which human society had ever been subject, would not lead them to endeavour its extirpation by other means than those of argumentation or ridicule, is more than I would answer for. According to *Condorcet*, *Voltaire* thought that “the influence of religion had corrupted morals, but had never contributed to improve them.”|| And when any end is much wished for, few persons are very scrupulous about the means

* *Corresp.* I. p. 389. (P.) “Je gémis sérieusement sur la persécution que les philosophes et la philosophie vont infailliblement essayer. N’avez-vous pas un souverain mépris pour votre France, quand vous lisez l’Histoire Grecque et Romaine? Trouvez-vous un seul homme persécuté à Rome, depuis *Romulus* jusqu’à *Constantin*, pour sa manière de penser? Le sénat aurait-il jamais arrêté l’*Encyclopédie*?” *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cxxxv. 1764), p. 315.

† See Vol. IX. pp. 79, 80, 105, 106, 174, 224.

‡ See *ibid.* pp. 222—224.

§ See *Lardner*, VIII. pp. 438, 439.

|| *Life of Voltaire*, p. 214. (P.) I cannot find this passage. *Condorcet*, in the following passage, represents *Voltaire*, upon this subject, far more favourably :

“Il montrera que des hommes qui veulent se rendre les arbitres de la morale, substituer leur autorité à la raison, leurs oracles à la conscience, loin de donner à la morale une base plus solide en l’unissant à des croyances religieuses, la corrompent et la détruisent, et cherchent non à rendre les hommes vertueux, mais à en faire les instrumens aveugles de leur ambition et de leur avarice.” *Œuvres*, C. p. 183.

which they think necessary to accomplish it. In such cases, as these, plausible pretences are too easily found.

If there be any such thing as serious subjects for the contemplation of man, they are those relating to *religion* and a *future state*; and yet *Voltaire* never treats them in a serious manner, but with a degree of levity which can be no recommendation of his character with thinking men. The only trait of seriousness which I find in these letters upon the subject, is what he writes about the article *Memmius*,* which he seems to have sent to *D'Alembert*, who, in his reply, did not mention it. "You are not pleased," he says, "with *Memmius*, for you say not a word about it. It seems clear to me that there is an intelligence in nature; but by the imperfections and miseries of this nature, it appears to me that this intelligence is limited. But mine is so much limited, that I always fear that I do not understand what I say. I respect yours infinitely."† *D'Alembert* was an avowed Atheist, but *Voltaire* was not. However, he here seems willing to compromise the matter with his correspondent, by supposing the Author of nature not to be that being of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, which the Scriptures represent him to be, so that we could have but little satisfaction in living under the government of such a Being; since he was either unable or unwilling to protect and bless his worshippers, and his system terminated with this uncertain state, this mixture of good and evil.‡ In such a state as the present, we easily see the

* See *Lettres de Memmius à Ciceron* in *Œuvres de Voltaire*, 1784, pp. 245—288. These three short letters are supposed to have been found in the *Vatican*, by a Russian admiral, translated into his language, and from thence into French. *Memmius* accompanies them with a large Commentary, in which he opposes the atheism of the poem, which has perpetuated his name, and maintains, "qu'il n'y a qu'un Dieu; contre Epicure, Lucrèce et autres philosophes." *Memmius* is made thus to reason:

"Mais qui a fait ces astres, cette terre, ces animaux, ces végétaux, ces germes, dans lesquels un art si merveilleux éclate? Il faut bien que ce soit un sublime artiste; il faut bien que ce soit une intelligence prodigieusement au-dessus de la nôtre, puis qu'elle a fait ce que nous pouvons à peine comprendre: et cette intelligence, cette puissance, c'est ce que j'appelle DIEU." *Ibid.* p. 254.

† *Corresp.* II. 382. (P.) "Vous n'avez pas été content de *Memmius*, car vous n'en dites mot. Il me paraît clair pourtant qu'il y a dans la nature une intelligence: et par les imperfections et les misères de cette nature, il me paraît que cette intelligence est bornée: mais la mienne est si prodigieusement bornée, qu'elle craint toujours de ne savoir ce qu'elle dit; elle respecte infiniment la vôtre." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. clxviii. 1771), p. 297.

‡ The king of Prussia would not admit that the sum of good exceeded that of evil in the world. (*Posth. Works*, XI. p. 62.) With such unworthy and gloomy ideas of the system, it is not at all extraordinary that he should have determined to put an end to his life, if the event of the war in which he was engaged with Austria had been unfortunate. (*Ibid.* X. pp. 170, 172.)

Writing to the Marquis D'Argens, Nov. 10th, 1760, he says, (*ibid.* X. p. 176,)

greatest wisdom, when it is considered as a state of discipline and probation, preparatory to another ; but it affords a dark and melancholy prospect, indeed, when considered as the final state of man. *Voltaire*, looking no farther, we cannot wonder that he was dissatisfied with it, or that, without regarding any thing in a serious light, he endeavoured to amuse himself as much as he could while he continued in it. The natural maxim of all unbelievers in a future state is, *Let us eat and drink*, or do any thing else to enable us to pass the time pleasantly, *for to-morrow we die*.

This great subject of *religion*, *Voltaire* and his correspondent always treat with the most unbecoming levity. We do not find in all the writings of the former any serious argumentation about it ; no examination of the state of things at the time of the promulgation of Christianity ; no disquisition concerning the nature of man, or of the value of testimony, in order to account for so great a number of the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, strongly prejudiced as they are known to have been in favour of the religions in which they were educated, abandoning them for another, which promised them nothing in this life, but only in a future one after death, and which required the sacrifice of every thing in this life, and sometimes of life itself, for the sake of it. Surely this is a problem that deserves a serious solution ! But it is in vain that we look for any thing serious in *Voltaire* or his friend, on the subject. All that they recommend or practise, is ridicule. And what is there so grave or important, that such a writer as *Voltaire* could not place in a ridiculous light, if he was disposed to do it ? “ My dear philosopher,” says *Voltaire*, “ render those pedants as enormously ridiculous as you can, in your conversation with persons of condition. It is impossible to do it from the press at Paris ; but a *bon mot* is as good a thing as a good book.”* “ You ought, in truth, to punish those little rascals by some of those books that are half serious and half in jest, which you can write so well. Ridicule does every thing ! It is the strongest of all weapons, and no person can handle it better

“ Adieu, dear Marquis ; write to me sometimes, and do not forget a poor devil who curses his fatal existence ten times a-day, and who wishes he were already in the place from whence no person returns to bring any news.” *Gustavus Adolphus*, a true Christian hero and warrior, would not have written in this manner, in such circumstances. (P.)

* *Corresp.* II. p. 169. (P.) “ Mon cher philosophe, rendez-vous ces pédaus-là aussi énormément ridicules que vous le pouvez, dans vos conversations avec les honnêtes gens ; car cela est impossible à Paris par la voie de la typographie ; mais un *bon mot* vaut bien un bon livre.” *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxi. 1767), p. 134.

than you. There is a great pleasure in laughing, while one takes one's revenge. If you do not crush superstition, you fail in your vocation.*

Exhortations to make themselves merry, and to laugh at every thing, as the best thing they could do in this world, are perpetual in this correspondence. "I am always," says *Voltaire*, "very ill. I divert my sufferings with the stupidity of mankind." "Good night, my very dear philosopher. Jest with life.† There is nothing good but that."‡ "Our consolation is to crush the barbarous pedants who have persecuted us. They are worse treated than we are. But this is the consolation of the damned. Take care of your health, and laugh at the whole world. It is the best thing, and it is the most reputable!"§

To this the answers of his correspondent are a perfect echo. "The chief thing, as you say, is to live merrily, and to laugh when we have the address to lay them on the ground."|| "As for me, I will laugh, as I do, at every thing, and will endeavour that nothing disturb my repose and my happiness. Adieu, my dear master;"¶ "always make a jest of every thing. There is nothing good but that." "Adieu, my dear and great philosopher.** Keep yourself well; laugh at the follies of men. I do so as much as I can; but I have not the folly to laugh too loud. We must not torment ourselves about what ought to serve for our amusement. (*Menus plaisirs.*)"††

What I think must shock a serious mind the most, is to find men making a jest of *death*, as well as of *life*, and of every thing in it. Surely, if there be a serious moment for

* *Corresp.* II. p. 250. (P.)

† *Ibid.* I. p. 369. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* II. p. 300. (P.) "Bon soir, mon très-cher philosophe; badinez avec la vie, elle n'est bonne qu'à cela." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. cxxiv. 1770), p. 234.

§ *Corresp.* II. p. 369. (P.) "Noire consolation est d'écraser des pédans barbares qui nous ont persécutés. Ils sont plus maltraités que nous, mais c'est la consolation des damnés. Portez-vous bien, et riez du monde entier, c'est le parti le meilleur et le plus honnête." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. clx. 1771), p. 286.

|| *Corresp.* II. p. 167. (P.) "L'essentiel, comme vous le dites, est de vivre gaïement, et de rire quand on a eu l'adresse de les coucher par terre." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. lxviii. 1767), p. 132.

¶ *Corresp.* II. p. 98. (P.) "Pour moi, je rirai, comme je fais de tout, et je tâcherai que rien ne trouble mon repos et mon bonheur. Adieu, mon maître." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xxxviii. 1766), p. 78.

** *Corresp.* II. p. 187. (P.)

†† *Ibid.* I. p. 270. (P.) "Adieu, mon cher et grand philosophe; portez-vous bien, moquez-vous de la sottise des hommes; j'en fais autant que vous, mais je n'ai pas la sottise de m'en moquer trop haut ni trop fort; il ne faut point faire son tourment de ce qui ne doit servir qu'aux menus plaisirs." *Œuvres*, XCVII. (Let. cii. 1762), p. 220.

man, whether he be a believer in a future state or not, it is when he is about to leave the world, and to bid a final adieu to all its pleasures and all its pains. The former he will leave with regret, and the latter with satisfaction ; but still his sentiments will naturally be of the more serious kind. To shut one's eyes for ever on such a scene of things as we have been witness to, the sun, moon, and stars, this well-furnished earth, our country, our friends, our pursuits, every thing that has ever been dear, and in any respect interesting to us, and neither to visit it any more, nor have any thing to supply its place, is an awful crisis !

But every person who has heard much of a future state, who has in his early life been himself a believer in it, who knows that mankind in general believe in it, and that among the believers in it there are men of as good understanding as himself, and who have perhaps made as diligent inquiries concerning it, can hardly avoid having some serious thoughts on the subject, when he thinks that he is about to die. This will more especially be the case if he believes that the world had an intelligent maker ; for then he must be sensible that the great Being who made man, and placed him on this theatre of existence, is able, whenever he pleases, to re-compose him, let the parts of which he consists be ever so much separated and dispersed, and bring him back to life again. He cannot say that a future life of *retribution* is an unsuitable sequel to such a state of *trial* and *discipline* as this evidently is ; and, therefore, as there are some chances in favour of such a state, even independent of revelation, he will probably not be without some degree of apprehension concerning it, when he has nothing else to look to. If he be at all acquainted with the principles, and have attended to the evidences of Christianity, which is said to *bring life and immortality to light*, his apprehensions cannot but be increased, though they should not have produced a full conviction with respect to it.

But admitting that a man should have attained the fullest assurance of there being no future state, which I cannot help thinking to be barely possible, and, therefore, to be the attainment of very few persons ; still, as I have said, the idea of a man passing from a state of existence into absolute annihilation, will naturally give him a serious thought ; and jesting and levity in such a situation must be affectation.*

* " For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resign'd :

And yet on this most serious of all subjects, we find *Voltaire* and his correspondent perpetually diverting themselves.

"My dear master," says *Voltaire*, "how much are the philosophers to be pitied! Their kingdom is not of this world, and they have no hope of reigning in any other."* "When you have a moment's leisure, inform me, I pray you, whether there be any thing to fear for unfortunate philosophy, which is always threatened. Ah, what have we to suffer from nature, from fortune, and from knaves and fools! I shall soon leave this wretched world, and it will be with the regret of not having been able to live with you. Manage your existence as long as you can. You are beloved and respected, which is the greatest of resources. It is true, they do not supply the place of a female friend, but it is more than all the rest."† "Have superstition in execration, and love me. Be assured that I shall deserve it by the sentiments that I shall have for you, till the day that I shall render my body to the four elements, which will be soon; for I have continual and increasing weakness."‡

Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing, ling'ring look behind?"

Gray's *Church-Yard*.

If this was the case with the ignorant rustics of the poet, much more must it be so with philosophers, men of observation and reflection, and who have had a higher enjoyment of life. (P.)

Wakefield quotes, and thus translates "a pathetic passage in *Euripides*, (*Alcest*. 291)" as bearing "a striking resemblance to this admirable stanza:"

"The malady, slow-pining, wastes her strength!
Dropp'd is her feeble hand! yet still, though life
Seems at its lowest ebb, yet still she strives,
With straining eye, to catch the light of day:
Still longs to turn one last, one ling'ring look
On that bright sun which shines for her no more."

Poems of Gray, with Notes, 1786, p. 176.

* *Corresp.* II. p. 111. (P.) "Ah! mon cher maître, que les philosophes sont à plaindre! Leur royaume n'est pas de ce monde, et ils n'ont pas l'espérance de régner dans un autre." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xlv. 1766), p. 88.

† *Corresp.* III. p. 166. (P.) "Lorsque vous aurez un moment de loisir, mandez-moi, je vous prie, s'il y a quelque chose à craindre pour cette malheureuse philosophie qui est toujours menacée. Ah, que nous avons à souffrir de la nature, de la fortune, des méchans et des sots! Je quitterai bientôt ce malheureux monde, et ce sera avec le regret de n'avoir pu vivre avec vous. Ménagez votre existence le plus long-temps que vous pourrez. Vous êtes aimé et considéré, c'est la plus grande des ressources. Il est vrai qu'elle ne tient pas lieu d'une amie intime; mais elle est au-dessus de tout le reste." *Œuvres*, XCIX. (Let. lxxxii. 1776), p. 147.

‡ *Corresp.* II. p. 68. (P.) "Ayez l'inf. . . en exécration et aimez-moi; comptez que je le mérite par les sentimens que j'ai pour vous jusqu'au jour où je rendrai mon corps aux quatre élémens, ce qui arrivera bientôt, car j'ai une foiblesse continuee avec des redoublemens." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xxviii. 1765, p. 54.

His correspondent, as before, answers as a faithful echo to the same sounds. "I have but a short time to live; I will die, if I can, laughing."* "Several of our brethren are near dying. Do not you think of being their companion in the journey; you are no proper companion for them. Rather wait till we set out together. Lest you should be in a hurry, I think I shall not make you wait long.—When I shall perceive myself ready to die, I shall inform you, if I can, of the day that I shall take my place in the coach."† "I have just been writing to your old disciple, that this cursed stomach does not permit me to project any other journeys than that to the other world, if there be another world, and that I shall soon wait upon his majesty on the banks of Styx; wishing, however, then to see him there soon. I have as much difficulty in digesting what I eat, as what I see and hear. I shall bid adieu, without regret, to a world in which so many foolish things are said and done. I am sometimes tempted to believe in a Providence, when I see the fate of *Cartouche-Freron* and *Mandrin-Childebrand*; but I change my opinion when I go to the necessary (garde robe)."‡

Mr. Hume also behaved with the same affected levity, for it could not be any thing else, when he was near dying, amusing himself and his friends with imagining himself in the place of one who, in a dialogue of *Lucian's*, was brought to the boat of *Charon*, and making all the excuses he could for staying a little longer before he stepped into it. One of them was, that he might "have the satisfaction of seeing the downfall of some of the prevailing systems of super-

* *Corresp.* II. p. 91. (P.) "J'ai peu de temps à vivre: je mourrai, si je puis, en riant." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. xxxvi. 1766), p. 72.

† *Corresp.* II. p. 268. (P.) "Nous avons bien des confrères qui menacent ruine. —Ne vous avisez pas d'être leur compagnon de voyage, vous n'êtes pas fait pour cette compagnie; attendez plutôt que nous partions ensemble: pour peu que vous soyez pressé, je crois que je ne vous ferai pas attendre.—Quand je me verrai prêt à mourir, je vous manderai, si je puis, le jour que j'aurai retenu ma place au coche." *Œuvres*, XCVIII. (Let. cxi. 1770), p. 210.

‡ *Corresp.* III. p. 211. A man must have little of the spirit of a philosopher who should be inclined to disbelieve a Providence, from any thing that he could see or experience in a necessary. (P.)

"Je viens d'écrire à votre ancien disciple que cet estomac maudit ne me permettait plus de projeter d'autres voyages que celui de l'autre monde (si autre monde y a), et que j'irai bientôt attendre sa majesté sur les rives du Styx, en faisant néanmoins des vœux, comme de raison, pour ne l'y pas voir sitôt. J'ai autant de peine à digérer ce que je mange, que ce que je vois et ce que j'entends: et je ferai mes adieux, sans beaucoup de regret, à un monde où il se fait et se dit tant de sottises. —Je suis quelquefois tenté de croire à la Providence, quand je vois le sort de *Cartouche-Freron*, et de *Mandrin-Childebrand*; mais je change d'avis quand je vais à la garde-robe." *Œuvres*, XCIX. (Let. cvi. 1777), pp. 181, 182.

stitution," with respect to which he said he had "been endeavouring to open the eyes of the public."*

I am much inclined to think that all these *unbelievers* thought more seriously on this serious subject than they would be thought to have done. If they could really behave with this levity in these circumstances, I shall think more unfavourably of their characters than I am at present disposed to do. Admitting that they did express their real sentiments and feelings, and actually met their deaths with so much indifference, and even pleasantry, how much more dignified and desirable is the death of a Christian, who, humbly hoping that he has lived to good purpose, usefully with respect to others, as well as happily to himself; having hereby discharged the duty which God required of him, the great business of life being faithfully done, can look back with satisfaction on a life so well spent, and forward into an approaching eternity, with humble confidence and joy, singing the triumphant song, *O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?*

How much more amiable was the death of *Gazzo*, the great-grandfather of *Petrarch*, of whom we have a short account in the *Memoirs* of the latter. He was a public notary at *Florence*, greatly respected for his probity and his good sense, so that he was often consulted even by philosophers and the literati of those times. "After having lived to the age of one hundred and four, in innocence and good works, he died, as *Plato* did, on the day of his birth, and in the bed in which he was born. His death resembled a quiet sleep. He expired, surrounded by his family, without pain or uneasiness, while he was conversing about God and virtue."† If any person can say that, with respect to *propriety* and true *dignity*, this was not greatly superior to the sentiments of *Voltaire* and *Hume*, in the same circumstances, his feelings are very different from mine.

The king of Prussia, who had been possessed of the most ample means of mental improvement, under the pressure of infirmity and old age, often expressed his dislike or contempt of theology, metaphysics, mathematics, and chemistry, and

* See the Supplement to *Hume's Life*, by Dr. Smith. (*P.*) *Life*, 1777, p. 50.

† "Après avoir passé 104 ans dans l'innocence et les bonnes œuvres, *Gazzo* mourut comme *Platon*, le même jour de sa naissance, et dans le lit où il étoit né. Sa mort—ressembloit à un sommeil tranquille, il s'endormoit dans le sein de sa famille sans douleur et sans inquiétude, ne parlant que de Dieu et de la vertu." *Mém. de F. Pétrarque* (Amst.), 1764, I. p. 9.

said his only consolation was in the *Belles Lettres*. This is like an emaciated horse rejecting the most nourishing corn, and feeding only on straw.*

Let the sentiments of these *unbelievers* be compared with those of Jesus, in a near prospect of a most painful and ignominious death. When, *lifting up his eyes to heaven*, he said, (*John* xvii. 1, 4, 5,) "Father, the hour is come. Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.—I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with the glory which I had with thee before the world was." With what a full persuasion of a favourable answer to this petition does he proceed to pray for his disciples, in the full confidence of their sharing with him in the honour and happiness that was designed for himself! *Ver.* 13: "Now come I to thee, and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves." *Vers.* 20—22: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also *who* shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one."

How triumphantly does the apostle Paul speak in the near view of death! *2 Tim.* iv. 7, 8: "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." What an excellent spirit is also discovered in the second epistle of *Peter*, and in those of *John*, all written not long before their deaths. These men, having in some measure *suffered* with their Master, had no doubt of their *reigning with him*, and *being glorified together*; [*Rom.* viii. 17; *2 Tim.* ii. 12;] and that, when this scene of things should be closed, "an entrance," as *Peter* says, (*2 Ep.* i. 11,) would "be administered unto *them* abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of *their* Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Admitting that there should be no future state, and that this was all an illusion: surely it is more happy with respect to one's self, as well as more edifying and useful to the world,

* See *Posth. Works*, X. pp. 39, 64. (P.)

to live and die in the expectation of it, since it adds so much to the dignity and happiness of man. But the expectation is as well founded as it is useful, consoling, and elevating.

SECTION VIII.

Of the Ignorance or gross Misrepresentations of Unbelievers, ancient and modern, with respect to Revealed Religion.

IT is not very easy to account for the ignorance of many *unbelievers*, diligent inquirers, and well-informed with respect to other things, of what relates to *revelation*. I cannot account for it but from an extreme dislike, and perhaps contempt of the subject, such as must lay a strong bias on their minds against the reception of it, and which must, therefore, render their opinion on the subject, of little value. Some facts of this kind are very remarkable, and well deserving of attention.

In the time of *Tacitus* and *Plutarch*, there were *Jews* in almost every city in the Roman empire, so many at *Rome*, that the emperor *Claudius* had thought it necessary to banish them from that metropolis,* though this banishment was not of long continuance. Wherever there were *Jews*, they had with them their *Scriptures*, then translated into *Greek*,† a language the most generally understood by all persons who could read. Indeed, most of the *Jews* themselves, who lived out of *Judea*, made use of no other; and as they were at that time eager to make proselytes, they would be far from concealing their books from any person; and yet it is evident that these writers had never seen them.

Had the *Carthaginians*, or any other people within the bounds of the *Roman* empire, been known to have had writings, containing accounts of their history and antiquities, however fabulous, no historian, undertaking to give an account of them, would have omitted to make inquiry concerning those writings, and to consult them; nor would he have failed to recite their contents, whether he had given credit to them or not. It would have been deemed a want of liberal curiosity, or very culpable negligence not to have done it. And yet *Tacitus*, who professed to give a pretty large outline of the history of the *Jews*, then lately reduced by the *Romans*, makes no mention of their books; and gives

* See Vol. IX. p. 57, *Note*.

† See Vol. XVI. p. 379, *Note* †.

such an account of them as no person could have done who had ever heard of their real history.

Though he was an historian of as great credit as any the *Romans* ever had to boast of, and he introduces his account of *Jerusalem* as a city of great fame, (*urbs famosa*,) and, therefore, one would think deserving of particular attention, there is a greater appearance of fable in his account of the *Jews*, whose metropolis it was, than in that of any other nation whose history he undertakes to recite.

"The *Jews*," he says, "were originally of *Crete*, and had their name from mount *Ida*, in that island, having been first called *Idæi*, and then, by corruption, *Judæi*; that when *Saturn* was expelled from the throne by *Jupiter*, they left that island, and settled in *Lybia*, which borders on *Egypt*; that in the reign of *Isis*, when *Egypt* was overstocked with inhabitants, they left that country, under the conduct of two leaders, *Hieronymus* and *Juda*.* Some," he says, "ascribe a more respectable origin to the *Jews*; but most writers agree, that in the time of a great pestilence, king *Bocchoris*, having consulted the oracle, was directed to purge his kingdom of so detestable a race of men as the *Jews* were; that then, under the conduct of *Moses*, they entered the desert, and when they were near perishing with thirst, they followed some asses, which led them to a watering place; and that after a journey of six days, on the seventh they seized upon some lands which they found inhabited. There they built a city and founded a temple, in which they placed the image of the animal by whose means they had been saved from destruction."† This writer did not, however, think it probable, as he says was maintained by some, (and among them was *Plutarch*,)‡ "that the *Jews* worshipped the god *Bacchus*, the conqueror of the *East*, because the festivals of *Bacchus* are of a cheerful nature, whereas those of the *Jews* are sordid, as well as absurd."§

The rest of the account which this celebrated historian gives of the *Jews*, is as wild and as wide of the truth as this

* *Tacit. Hist. V. pp. 2, 3; Opera, 1796, III. pp. 294, 295.*

† "Effigiem animalis quo monstrante errorem sitimque depulerant, penetrali sacrare; cæso ariete, velut in contumeliam *Hammonis*." *Ibid.* p. 296.

‡ In his *Symposiacks* or *Table-talk*, (B. iv. Q. v.,) where, referring to the *Feast of Tabernacles*, he says, "the time and manner of the greatest and most holy solemnity of the *Jews* is exactly agreeable to the holy rites of *Bacchus*." See "*Plutarch's Morals*," 1685, III. (Pt. viii.), pp. 200—202.

§ "Quia sacerdotes eorum tibiâ tympanisque concinebant, hederâ vinciebantur, vitisque aurea templo repta: 'Liberum patrem coli, domitorem *Orientis*' quidam

is. Had he ever seen the *Septuagint* translation of the books of *Moses*, he could not but have perceived that no history whatever, and least of all the ancient ones of *Greece* or *Rome*, bear so many internal marks of genuineness, or of their having been written while the facts were recent, the particulars of persons, times, and places, being so numerous. Besides, *Josephus*, the friend of the emperor *Titus*, having written his history before that of *Tacitus*, he might have consulted *his* work, which is written in a manner more adapted to gain the attention of strangers, with which view it was indeed composed. Nothing but the most extreme and unjustifiable contempt of the *Jewish* nation can account for this wilful ignorance of every thing relating to them.* And yet it might have been imagined that, without mentioning the reigns of *David* or *Solomon*, or any of the more splendid circumstances in the ancient Jewish history, the reign of *Herod the Great*, whose power and opulence were well known at *Rome*, the long residence of king *Agrippa*, the friend of *Caligula*, in that city, and also of *Berenice*, the favourite of *Titus*,† might have contributed to make this nation better known, and have rescued them from that contempt. Few other nations, conquered by the Romans, were able to boast of personages so conspicuous, and at the same time so well known at *Rome*.

It is evident that *Tacitus* knew no more of the *Christians* than he did of the *Jews*, though they had their origin, in a manner, in his own time, though he gives a particular account of *Nero's* persecution of them, and speaks of them as so numerous in *Rome* only, that he calls them a great multitude (*ingens multitudo*). He mentions nothing concerning them but such an absurd and opprobrious general character as was given of them by the merest vulgar among the Heathens of that age, calling Christianity a mischievous superstition; (*exitiabilis superstitio*;) and he mentions the

arbitrati sunt, nequaquam congruentibus institutis: quippe Liber festos lætosque ritus posuit: Judæorum mos absurdus sordidusque." *Tacit. Hist.* p. 301.

"The commentators are not a little surprised that an historian, of an enlarged and comprehensive mind, should not have thought it worth his while to gain the most exact information concerning a people, whose final ruin he was to relate. That neglect is still more surprising, when it is considered that, in the reign of *Trajan*, when *Tacitus* published his work, the page of Jewish history was fully disclosed, and accessible to the curiosity of every Roman.—*Tacitus*, however, neglecting all these advantages, has given an account so mixed with fable, that the gleam of truth, which breaks out in one short passage, is almost extinguished by the surrounding rubbish." *Murphy's Tacitus*, 1793, III. p. 518.

* See Vol. IV. p. 486.

† See Vol. XIII. pp. 492, 493.

universal detestation in which the Christians were held, (though without assigning or hinting at any reason for it,) as made it easy for *Nero* to destroy them without exciting any dangerous alarm, on the false pretence of their having fired the city.*

Pliny the younger, the friend and correspondent of *Tacitus*, governor of Bythinia, under the emperor *Trajan*, a man of letters too, and who wrote about the time that the apostle *John* died, appears to have known nothing more of the Christians, though by his own account they were so numerous in his own province that the public sacrifices were in a great measure discontinued, than he had collected from the examination of such of them as had been brought to his tribunal; so that it is evident, as *Lardner* says, that he had never seen, perhaps never heard of, any of their books, though those that compose the *New Testament*, and several others, were then extant, and in the hands of those who were far from being disposed to conceal them.†

Whether this ignorance arose from contempt or had any other cause, it argues a state of mind indisposed to attend to any evidence that might have been alleged in favour of the Jewish or Christian religions. Indeed, this contempt or dislike being known, few persons would choose to obtrude upon them any such evidence. Whatever they heard of this kind must have been by accident, and would have found them little disposed to give it a patient and candid hearing. At the very mention of *miracles*, it is probable that they would have dismissed their informer with a smile of contempt, before he could have adduced any evidence in support of his allegations. This would more especially be the treatment which such men as the apostles, and other early preachers of Christianity, men in the lower ranks of life, and almost wholly illiterate, would meet with from philosophers, men of letters in general, and all the more distinguished classes.

This state of things will pretty well account for the ignorance of the ancient Heathens with respect to facts in the *Jewish* or *Christian* histories. It will also account for the time that it took for the propagation of Christianity, which, considering these circumstances, was very rapid. It is more difficult to account for the similar ignorance of modern unbelievers, who have such abundant means of information perpetually obtruding itself upon them; and yet we meet

* See Vol. IX. pp. 80, 81.

† See Vol. IV. pp. 485, *Note*, 511, 523, 524, 533; Vol. IX. pp. 106, 107; Vol. XVI. p. 136.

with examples of as great ignorance at this day, and this in men of letters, men well acquainted with ancient languages and history, and of the most respectable abilities.

A dislike to the subject of religion generated from the causes that have been mentioned in a preceding Section, will operate even to the extinction of all liberal curiosity with respect to it. I cannot in any other way account for that extreme ignorance of the Scriptures which is to be found among many well-educated persons in England, and other Christian countries. The Bible is not read in genteel schools or in families; and though it consists of the most ancient of all books, and on other accounts would naturally invite the study of the curious, great numbers of persons who have even had a liberal education are unable to give any account of their general contents. The following instance of the extreme ignorance of the Scriptures in a person of whom more knowledge of them might have been expected, may serve both to amuse and to instruct my readers: being one time in company with Dr. Franklin, and a person now dead, but of considerable genius and a literary turn, brother to an English nobleman now living, being introduced, he turned the conversation upon the subject of the simplicity and beauty of the *Oriental* style of composition; and to exemplify his observations, he took down his Bible, and opening it, seemed to read, but really repeated *memoriter*, that chapter which he had himself composed from an old *Jewish* tradition concerning *Abraham*.^{*} This the gentleman, not doubting but that it was a real chapter in the Bible, expressed himself much pleased with. On this the Doctor smiled, and the gentleman perceiving that he had been taken in, was a little mortified. However, to try him a little far-

* Which *Franklin* entitled "a Parable against Persecution." *Whitlocke* thus gives the "story which," he says, "I find in the Jews' books:"

"When *Abraham* sate at his tent door, according to his custom, waiting to entertain strangers, he espied an old man stooping and leaning on his staff, weary with age and travel, coming towards him, who was an hundred years of age; he received him kindly, washed his feet, provided supper, caused him to sit down; but observing that the old man ate and prayed not, nor begged for a blessing upon his meat, asked him why he did not worship the God of heaven.

"The old man told him, that he worshipped the fire only, and acknowledged no other god; at which answer, *Abraham* grew so zealously angry, that he thrust the old man out of his tent, and exposed him to all the evils of the night, and an unguarded condition. When the old man was gone, God called to *Abraham*, and asked him where the stranger was; he replied, I thrust him away, because he did not worship thee. God answered him, I have suffered him these hundred years, although he dishonoured me, and couldst not thou endure him one night, when he gave thee no trouble? Upon this, saith the story, *Abraham* fetched him back again, and gave him hospitable entertainment and wise instruction." *Essays, Ecclesiastical and Civil*, 1706, pp. 105, 106.

ther, the Doctor took the Bible again, and read the first chapter of the book of *Job*, which the gentleman also expressed himself much pleased with, but said it was no more a part of the Bible than the other. The Doctor then shewed him the Bible, and said he might read it himself. But even this did not satisfy him. He said it might be a book of his own printing, and no real Bible at all.

The Doctor had before observed to me, that one species of profaneness was now extinct, which was ridiculing the Scriptures; because they were no longer read by such persons as were used to take that liberty with them.

He acknowledged to me that he had not given so much attention to the evidences of Christianity as the subject required, and desired me to recommend to him a few treatises (but he added, of no great length) on the subject; promising to read them with care, and to give me his opinion of them. Accordingly, I named to him that part of Dr. *Hartley's Observations on Man* which treats of the evidence of revelation,* and a work of my own, which he said he would read. But the American war breaking out, and he leaving *England* presently after this, I do not know whether he ever read them or not. Nor, indeed, do I know that he died an *unbeliever*.†

Can it then be thought extraordinary that, thus ignorant and prejudiced as many persons are against religion in general, they should not be believers? They want the necessary elements of Christian faith, viz. a knowledge of the facts on which it is founded, or have only such a knowledge as is acquired by hearing them ridiculed. In the same situation, they might have been unbelievers in any other history. They might think the *Greek* and *Roman* histories to be incredible, and come to smile at them as they do at that of the Jews and of Jesus.

M. *Volney*, who seems to have read the Scriptures, at least in part, gives an account of the history and religion of the *Hebrews* as romantic as that of *Tacitus*. According to him, Moses was "one of those bold and energetic spirits who proposed to themselves great objects of ambition.‡ Desirous of separating his nation from every other, and of founding a distinct empire, he formed the design of laying the foundation of it on religious prejudices. But in vain did he proscribe the worship of symbols, which prevailed in Lower

* See Vol. II. p. xxi.

† See *supra*, pp. 15, 20, 21, *Neto*; Vol. I. *Memoirs*, 140.

‡ *Ruines*, Ed. 2, *Paris*, 1792, p. 263, &c. (P.) "Des hommes hardis et d'une ame énergique, qui se proposèrent de grands objets d'ambition." *Ibid.* p. 262.

Egypt and Phœnicia. His God was not the less an Egyptian one, the invention of those priests whose disciple he had been ; and *Yahouh*, discovered by his proper name the *essence* (of beings) and by his symbol the *bush of fire*, is no other than the *soul of the world*, the *principle of motion*, which a short time after, Greece adopted under the same denomination of its *You-piter*, the *regenerating being*, and under that of *Ei*, *existence*; which the Thebans consecrated under the name of *Kneph*, which Sais adored under the emblem of *Isis veiled*, which Pythagoras honoured under the name of *Vesta*, and which the Stoic philosophy defined with precision, by calling it the *principle of fire*.

“Moses endeavoured in vain to efface from his religion every thing that recalled the worship of the stars. There remained, in spite of him, a number of traces of it. And the seven lights or planets of the grand candlestick, and the *twelve stones*, or signs in the urim of the high-priest; the festival of the two equinoxes, which at this epoch formed each of them a year; the ceremony of the *lamb*, or the *celestial ram*, then in his fifth degree; in fine, the name of *Osiris* itself preserved in his song, and the ark or coffer, in imitation of the tomb in which that god was put, remain to serve as evidences of the relation of these ideas, and of their derivation from a common source.”*

M. *Volney* also expresses his approbation of the account that *Diodorus Siculus* gives of the *Jews*, who says, “that they were driven out of Egypt in a time of famine, when the

* *Ruines*, pp. 263, &c. (P.) “Voulant séparer sa nation de toute autre, et se former un empire isolé et distinct, il conçut le dessein d’en asseoir les bases sur les préjugés religieux, et d’élever autour de lui un rempart sacré d’opinions et de rites. Mais vainement proscrivit-il le culte des *symboles* régnant dans la basse Egypte et la Phénicie; son Dieu n’en fut pas moins un Dieu *Egyptien* de l’invention de ces prêtres dont Moïse avoit été le disciple; et *Yahouh*, décelé par son propre nom l’*essence* (des êtres) et par son *symbole* le *buisson de feu*, n’est que l’*ame du monde*, le *principe moteur*, que peu après la Grèce adopta sous la même dénomination dans son *You-piter*, être *régénérateur*; et sous celle d’*Ei*, l’*existence*, que les Thébains consacraient sous le nom de *Kneph*; que *Sais* adoroit sous l’emblème d’*Isis voilée*, avec cette inscription : *Je suis tout ce qui a été, tout ce qui est, tout ce qui sera, et nul mortel n’a levé mon voile*; que Pythagore honoroit sous le nom de *Vesta*, et que la philosophie Stoïcienne définissoit avec précision en l’appelant le principe du feu.

“Moïse voulut en vain effacer de sa religion tout ce qui rappelloit le culte des astres : une foule de traits restèrent malgré lui pour le retracer; et les sept *lumières* ou *planètes* du grand chandelier, les *douze pierres* ou *signes* de l’*urim* du grand prêtre, la fête des deux équinoxes, qui, à cette époque, formoient chacun une année, la cérémonie de l’*agneau* ou *belier céleste*, alors à son quinzième degré; enfin le nom d’*Osiris* même conservé dans son *cantique*, et l’*arche* ou coffre imité du tombeau où ce Dieu fut enfermé, demeurent pour servir de témoins à la filiation de ses idées, et à leur extraction de la source commune.” *Ibid.* pp. 263, 264.

country was overstocked with strangers, and that Moses, a man of extraordinary wisdom and courage, took that opportunity of fixing his nation in the mountains of Judea." M. *Volney* adds, "It would seem paradoxical to reduce the six hundred thousand armed men, which he led thither, to six thousand; but I can verify this paradox by so many proofs, drawn from the books themselves, that it is necessary to rectify this error of the copies."*

On this display of the imagination, for it is nothing else, it is needless to make any remarks. I shall only observe, that the name *Osiris*, which M. *Volney* finds in the song of *Moses*, is from this verse in which he is comparing the God of the *Hebrews* with those of other nations; saying, (*Deut.* xxxii. 31,) "For their rock is not as our rock; even our enemies themselves being judges,"† in which the Hebrew word rendered *rock* is *tzour*, צור. And it is quite common in the *Hebrew* Scriptures to compare God to a *rock* and a *fortress*, as a Being able to afford men effectual protection. Surely Moses, when he directly opposes the God of his nation to other gods, and evidently had in his eye those of the *Egyptians*, could not mean to say, to intimate, or give any room to suppose that they were the same.

In what manner M. *Volney* can prove that the number *six hundred thousand* is an error of the copy for *six thousand*, does not appear. If it be an error, many other numbers which agree with this, must be errors of the copy also. Besides, M. *Volney* will find some difficulty in accounting for so small a number as six thousand men, driven by famine out of *Egypt* into a wilderness, where they would find it still more difficult to subsist, seizing upon such a country as *Palestine*, then fully peopled by warlike nations, not less than thirty-one in number. It would be more natural and more consistent in him, to say that the whole of the history is fabulous; that the *Israelites* never did conquer *Palestine*; that they never were in *Egypt*; or that there never was any such nation in the world. This would not be more extraordinary than his maintaining that there never was such a person as Jesus Christ.

* *Ruines*, p. 378. (P) " 'Que les Juifs furent chassés d'Egypte dans un temps de disette, où le pays étoit surchargé d'étrangers, et que Moïse, homme supérieur par sa prudence et par son courage, saisit cette occasion pour établir sa nation dans les montagnes de Judée.' (*Diodore*, L. 34 et 40.) Il semblera paradoxal de dire que les 600,000 hommes armés qu'il y conduisit, doivent se réduire à 6,000; mais je légitimerai ce paradoxe par tant de preuves tirées des livres eux-mêmes, qu'il faudra réformer une erreur venue des copistes." *Ibid.* in *Notes*.

† See Vol. XI. p. 299.

This opinion, strange as it must appear to most persons, is avowed by M. *Volney*; though the contrary was never called in question by any ancient *unbeliever*, Jew or Heathen, who ever mentioned the subject of Christianity. *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, and *Pliny*, all speak of *Christ* as a real person, and the first of them as having been crucified in the reign of *Tiberius*. However, M. *Volney* says, that “the Jews, returned from the Babylonish Captivity, had borrowed many of the ideas in religion from their late masters, the Chaldeans and Persians; that their former prophets, seeing the progress made by the Assyrians in their conquests of the neighbouring states, easily foresaw the approaching fate of their own country; and at the same time that they expressed their concern for that event, they also expressed their earnest wishes for its restoration, and in their enthusiasm spake of some person who was to accomplish that most desirable event, a *deliverer*, and restorer of the affairs of their nation, and one who would, moreover, make Jerusalem the capital of an empire which should extend over the whole world.”*

“With these ideas,” M. *Volney* proceeds to say, “there concurred others, derived from the sacred books of the Chaldeans and Persians, that there would be a revolution of the world at the end of six thousand years; and that whereas these had been the age, or reign, of *evil*, they would be succeeded by an age or reign of *happiness*.† These calculations being admitted by the Jews, they began to reckon near six thousand years from the creation” (which he terms *fictitious*) “of the world, and concluded that this happy period was at hand. This expectation exciting a great fermentation in their minds, the coming of this *great mediator* and *final judge* was generally expected and wished for, to put an end to the calamities of which they complained.” He then says that, “in consequence of speaking of this

* *Ruines*, p. 266. (P.) “Les prêtres et les grands, transportés à Babylone, et élevés dans les sciences des Kaldéens, s’imburent, pendant un séjour de 70 ans, de toute leur théologie.—Depuis que les Assyriens avoient détruit le royaume de *Samarie*, des esprits judicieux, *prévoyant* la même destinée pour *Jérusalem*, n’avoient cessé de l’annoncer, de la *prédire*; et leurs *prédications* avoient toutes eu ce caractère particulier, d’être terminées par des *vœux de rétablissement et de régénération*, énoncés sous la forme de *prophéties*: les hiérophantes, dans leur enthousiasme, avoient peint un *roi libérateur* qui devoit rétablir la nation dans son ancienne gloire; le *peuple Hébreu* devoit redevenir un peuple puissant, conquérant, et *Jérusalem* la capitale d’un empire étendu sur tout l’univers.” *Ibid.* pp. 268, 269.

† “Il étoit porté dans les livres sacrés des Perses et des Kaldéens, que le monde, composé d’une *révolution* totale de douze mille, étoit partagé en deux *révolutions* patielles dont l’une âge et règne du bien, se terminoit au bout de six mille, et l’autre âge et règne du mal, se terminoit au bout de six autres mille.” *Ibid.* pp. 270, 271.

personage, some person was said to have seen him, and that this vague rumour soon became a general certainty. The popular report became an averred fact. The imaginary personage was realized, and from this phantom, all the circumstances of mythological tradition being brought together, there resulted an authentic and complete history of which no person was allowed to doubt.”*

A romance more improbable than this, in all its parts, was never, surely, conceived in the mind of man. It is needless to oppose reasoning to such a play of imagination. From reading it one would conclude that the sacred books of the *Chaldeans* and *Persians*, of which *M. Volney* speaks, were all extant, and those of the *Jeûs* entirely lost ; and yet of the former, or any predictions contained in them, we know in a manner nothing ; whereas the latter are extant, and may be consulted. And if they be, it will be seen that they contain nothing that, by any fair construction, can be supposed to have been borrowed from the *Chaldeans* or *Persians*, the religion of the *Jews* being the very reverse of theirs in the most fundamental articles.

In the writings of the *Hebrew* prophets, some of them delivered when the *Babylonians* were very little known, the captivity of the *Jews* by that nation, and not by the *Assyrians*, who had conquered the ten tribes, is distinctly foretold, together with the fall of their empire, and the utter desolation of *Babylon*, in such a manner as was not fully accomplished till within a few of the last centuries. The exact duration of the *Babylonish* Captivity was foretold by *Jeremiah* some time before it commenced ; and *Daniel*, at the beginning of the *Babylonian* empire, foretold the rise and fall of three others in succession, before the glorious and happy times announced by the preceding prophets. Besides, *Moses*, while the *Israelites* were in the Wilderness, not only took for granted their settlement in the land of *Canaan*, but foretold their expulsion out of it, their present dispersed and calamitous state, and their future glorious one.

* “ Dans les calculs admis par les Juifs, on commençoit à compter près des six mille ans depuis la création (fictive) du monde. Cette coïncidence produisit de la fermentation dans les esprits. L’on ne s’occupa plus que d’une fin prochaine : on interrogea les hiérophantes et leurs livres mystiques, qui en assignèrent divers termes ; on attendit le grand médiateur, le juge final ; on le désira pour mettre fin à tant de calamités.

“ A force de parler de cet être, quelqu’un fut dit l’avoir vu ; et ce fut assez d’une première rumeur pour établir une certitude générale. Le bruit populaire devint un fait avéré : l’être imaginaire fut réalisé ; et sur ce fantôme, toutes les circonstances des traditions mythologiques venant à se rassembler, il en résulta une histoire authentique et complète, dont il ne fut plus permis de douter.” *Ruines*, pp. 271, 272.

Did *he* learn all this from the sacred books of the *Chaldeans* and *Persians* ?

But the most extraordinary circumstance in this curious narration is, that this *great deliverer*, who was to rescue the *Jews* from their state of servitude, and give them the empire of the world, was reported to be come, while the *Jews* remained in subjection to the *Romans*; that this persuasion did not lose any ground when the Romans had almost exterminated the nation, and became a certain fact, when the emperor *Adrian* had so broken and dispersed the people, that not one of them remained in their own country.*

Also, without any apparent cause, or magical instrument of transformation, this mighty *conqueror*, the subject of so many prophecies, the great hope of the whole nation of the *Jews*, is metamorphosed into a *crucified malefactor*, whose followers continued in a state of persecution near three hundred years; and then the history of *Jesus* and his apostles, though originally no better founded than that of the twelve champions of *Christendom*, obtained universal credit, and no person was even allowed to call it in question. Compared with this, the conceits of *Don Quixote* are far within the bounds of probability.

However, as the words *Jesus* and *Christ* occur in books, as the name or surname of a person, *M. Volney*, in order to support his opinion of this being nothing more than a fictitious person, derives the term *Christ* from the *Hebrew* word, "*Heres*, which signifies *the sun*, and in *Arabic* *the guardian* or *preserver*, the proper epithet," he says, "of *Vichnou*; and from this," he says, "the *Indians* imagined their god *Chris-en*, or *Christna*."† The word *Jesus* he derives from *Yes*, which is formed "by the union of three letters, the numeral value of which is 608, one of the solar periods."‡ The same word *Jesus*, he says, is "an ancient and Cabalistic name given to the younger *Bacchus*, the clandestine or nocturnal son of the *virgin Minerva*, which in the whole history of his life, and even of his death, retraces the history of the God of the Christians, that is; of the *star of the day*, of

* See Vol. IX. p. 101.

† *Ruines*, p. 386. (P.) "*Chris*, c'est-à-dire, le *conservateur*. Selon leur usage constant, les Grecs ont rendu par X ou jota Espagnol, le *hâ* aspiré des Orientaux, qui disoient *hâris*; en Hébreu, *herès* s'entend du soleil; mais en Arabe le mot radical signifie *garder*, *conserver*, et *haris*, *gardien*, *conservateur*. C'est l'épithète propre de *Vichenou*; et ceci démontre à la fois l'identité des trinités Indienne et Chrétienne, et leur commune origine." *Ibid.* pp. 385, 386, *Notes*.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 275. (P.) "Par la réunion de trois lettres, lesquelles, en valeur numérale, formoient le nombre 608, l'une des *périodes solaires*." *Ibid.*

which both of them are emblems.”* Accordingly, M. Volney makes Christianity to be “an allegorical worship of the sun, under the Cabalistic names of *Chris-en* or *Christ*, and of *Yes-us* or *Jesus*.”†

M. Volney, if we may judge from his numerous quotations of ancient writers in all the learned languages, oriental, as well as occidental, must be acquainted with all those languages; for he makes no mention of any translations, and yet, to judge from this specimen of his knowledge of them, he cannot have the smallest tincture of that of the *Hebrew* or even of the *Greek*. For it is well-known that *Jesus* is nothing more than the Greek pronunciation of *Joshua*, which is always rendered *Jesus* in the *Septuagint*; and that *Christ* is the proper translation of the Hebrew *Messiah*, which signifies *anointed*, and is derived from *χρίω*, which signifies *to anoint*.

As it is in vain to use any argumentation on so plain a subject, I shall endeavour to illustrate M. Volney's curious reasoning by putting a similar case. There exists a sect of Christians called *Calvinists*. Now a person who was a stranger to them, but knew that the word was derived from the Latin *calvus*, which signifies *bald*, might imagine they were so called from their cutting off their hair. But another person, knowing no more of *Latin* than M. Volney probably does of *Greek*, but having a smattering of *English*, might suppose that *Calvin* was derived from the word *calf*, and conclude that the *Calvinists* were so called from their worshipping a calf, in imitation of the ancient *Egyptians*. And there would be just as much of truth or probability in this, as in M. Volney's supposition that Christianity is an allegorical worship of the sun, and that the words *Jesus* and *Christ*, had the *Cabalistic* derivation that he gives them.

Dean Swift's ingenious dissertation to prove the antiquity of the English language, in which he derives *Jupiter* from *Jew Peter*, *Archimedes* from *Hark ye maids*, and *Alexander the Great* from *all eggs under the grate*, is exactly of a piece with these curious etymologies of M. Volney; but with this difference, that the Dean was in jest, whereas M. Volney is in serious earnest.

* *Ruines*, p. 275. (P.) “Nom ancien et cabalistique attribué au jeune *Bacchus*, fils clandestin (nocturne) de la vierge *Minerve*, lequel, dans toute l'histoire de sa vie, et même de sa mort, retrace l'histoire du *Dieu des Chrétiens*, c'est-à-dire, de l'*astre du jour* dont ils sont tous les deux l'emblème.” *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. p. 266. (P.) “Culte allégorique du soleil, sous ses noms cabalistiques de *Chris-en* ou *Christ* et d'*Yés-us* ou *Jesus*.” *Ibid*.

The reducing Christianity to an allegory seems to be not uncommon with unbelievers in France. Just before I left England, I had sent to me, (I believe with the consent of the author,) the plan of a large and very elaborate work, entitled, *A History of all the forms of worship, and of all the religions in the world*, and which I imagine will soon be, if it be not already, published. In this it is said, that "the author, after having discovered the secret of *mysteries* in general, at length takes off the veil which has so long covered those of the Christians. He finds the origin of their sacred fictions in the theology of the magi, which the Jews have copied often word for word; and that of the *lamb*, the *restorer*, in the mysteries of their *Mithra*, dead and risen again, like Christ, and whose birth was celebrated the 25th of December at midnight, at the rising of the constellation of the *celestial virgin*; which in the ancient spheres of Persia was represented giving suck to an infant, called *Christ* and *Jesus*."

"In the second part of his work, the author brings this fiction nearer to that of the Phœnicians who worshipped the sun under the name of *Adonis*, of that of the famous *Osiris*, of that of *Bacchus*, of that of *Atys* of the Phrygians, all fables, the heroes of which die and rise again, and which have no other object than that of *god the sun*, that is to say, the same divinity which the sect of Christians adore under the name of *Christ*. In one word, the author demonstrates that the God of the Christians is that of the Incas of Peru; and that there is no difference between them, except that the latter knew what God they worshipped, and the former" (the Christians) "are still ignorant of it; though the gospel of John informs them of it every day, when he says that Christ is 'that light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.'"

I shall be glad to see this curious work,* which I am told is very voluminous; not doubting but it will afford as much amusement as M. Volney's *Ruins*. But surely such productions as these do not mark *the age of reason*. I have seen a pamphlet in *French*, in which the word *Christians*, in that language *Chrétiens*, was derived from *Cretans*, the author supposing them to have been originally of that island, and thence to have had their name.

Before such crude notions as these can be admitted,

* Since this was written I have seen this work advertised, as printed at Paris in 12 vols. 8vo. with the name of the author, Dupuis, and an *Atlas*. (P.) See *Remarks* on M. Dupuis's "Origin of all Religions," *infra*.

unbelievers must do what M. *Volney*, with as much of truth as any thing in the preceding quotation from him, says of *believers*. "The first article of all belief, the first dogma of all religion, is an absolute proscription of doubt, the prohibition of examination, and the renouncing of one's own judgment."* Surely he could never have read the *New Testament*, in which we find, (1 *Peter* iii. 15,) "Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear," that is, in a modest and respectful manner. 1 *Thess.* v. 21: "Prove all things. Hold fast that which is good."

It is such a system as that of M. *Volney*, so little able to bear examination, that requires the aid of implicit faith; for in no work whatever have I met with so many arbitrary and manifestly ill-founded assertions.

Such, in particular, is what he says concerning *priests*: "The spirit of priests," he says, "their system of conduct, their actions, and their morals, are absolutely the same. They every where consist of private societies, corporations that are the enemies of the rest of the community. They every where attribute to themselves prerogatives and immunities, by means of which they ease themselves of the burdens of the other classes. They every where live in celibacy, to get rid even of domestic embarrassments. Every where, under the cloke of poverty, they find the secret of being rich, and of procuring all sorts of enjoyments. Under the pretence of poverty, they receive greater revenues than those of princes. Under the pretence of devotion, they live in idleness and licentiousness," &c. &c. &c.†

This is but a part of M. *Volney's* character of all priests. But indiscriminate invectives on whole classes of men are never just. Certainly this character does not apply to Jesus, the apostles, or the preachers of Christianity for three hundred years, except in some small degree to the

* *Ruines*, p. 115. (P.) "Le premier article de chaque croyance, le premier dogme de toute religion, est la proscription absolue du doute, l'interdiction de l'examen, l'abnégation de son propre jugement." *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* p. 291. (P.) "— L'esprit des prêtres, leur système de conduite, leurs actions, leurs mœurs étoient absolument les mêmes; que par-tout ils avoient composé des associations secrètes, des corporations ennemies du reste de la société; que par-tout ils s'étoient attribué des prérogatives, des immunités, au moyen desquelles ils vivoient à l'abri de tous les fardeaux des austres classes; que par-tout ils n'essayant ni les fatigues du laboureur, ni les dangers du militaire, ni les revers du commerce; que par-tout ils vivoient célibataires, afin de s'épargner jusqu'aux embarras domestiques; que par-tout, sous le manteau de la pauvreté, il trouvoient le secret d'être riches et de se procurer toutes les jouissances." *Ibid.* pp. 291, 292.

bishops in the greater sees. M. *Volney*, however, will say that there never were such men. But he has read the history of *France*, and can he say that it applies to the *Protestant* clergy in that country? Did it apply to them at the Revocation of the Edict at *Nantes*? How many of them perished in dungeons, in the galleys, and by distress of every kind,* seeking a precarious subsistence in foreign countries, when by conforming to the orders of the king they might have lived at their ease. In fact, this character has never applied to the Christian clergy, except to the bishops in the greater sees, and some of the monks; and to them with many exceptions and much abatement. The established clergy in *England*, as a body, are but slenderly provided for, those in *Scotland* still worse, and they do not profess celibacy. To the *Dissenting* ministers in that country, to say nothing of the persecutions they have suffered, it applies still less. Of this I am some judge, having been one of them more than forty years, and I can say without fear of being contradicted, that in the most favourable situations the profession never yielded me half a maintenance, and yet in this respect my success greatly exceeded my original expectations. And what does it do for me here, except perhaps expose me to the contempt of such men as M. *Volney*, which, however, I feel myself pretty well able to bear.

SECTION IX.

Of the Tendency to Atheism in Modern Unbelievers.

THE progress of infidelity in the present age is attended with a circumstance which did not so frequently accompany it in any former period, at least in *England*, which is, that unbelievers in revelation generally proceed to the disbelief of the being and providence of God, so as to become properly *Atheists*. However, when the subject is duly considered, it will be found that the same disposition and turn of mind which leads to Deism will naturally in the present state of knowledge lead to Atheism.

Whatever exceptions there may be to the observation, it is for the most part true, that a *wish* to reject revelation precedes the actual rejection of it. The belief of it is felt

* See Vol. IX. p. 19; Vol. X. pp. 446—461.

as a *restraint*, which many persons are desirous of throwing off; and this is more effectually done on the *Atheistical* than on the *Deistical* system. I must be allowed to take it for granted, because I am confident that, with few exceptions, (and I should rejoice if I could think they were more,) it is a fact, that it is the too strict morals of the Scriptures that displeases the generality of *unbelievers*. The rule of life prescribed in those books is more definite, and less easily evaded, than that which is perceived by the mere light of nature, which is too easily made to bend to men's inclinations; so that they who profess to follow *that* only, find no great difficulty in justifying to themselves any indulgence to which they are much inclined, and which Christians of every denomination condemn. And for the same reason that an *unbeliever*, viciously inclined, prefers natural to revealed religion, he will prefer no religion at all, or pure Atheism, which rejects every idea of a future state, to Deism which admits of it.

While the rewards of virtue and the punishments of vice are supposed to take place in this life only, and are seen to be what they really are, very various and uncertain, a regard to them will not be sufficient to controul strong natural inclinations. We see every day that, though habitual intemperance occasions diseases and premature death, thousands, who yet are as far from courting disease or death as other persons, persist in sensual indulgence; thinking at the time that in each particular transgression of the rules of temperance, there is little, if any thing, criminal; that it is a thing which affects themselves only; and flattering themselves that the consequences will either not take place with respect to *them*, or will be inconsiderable, so as to be overbalanced by the present enjoyment. Now were all consideration of religion removed, men would have no more restraint with respect to any practice whatever, to which they were naturally inclined, than they usually have with respect to excess in eating and drinking. They would have no dread of future punishment, and would flatter themselves with the hope of escaping any temporal inconvenience.

While the belief of the being of a God, of a providence, and of a future state, were articles of faith with those who rejected revelation, (which was the case with all the celebrated *unbelievers* in *England* in the last and the beginning of the present [xviii.] century,) there was a considerable restraint upon men's conduct. It is true that the rule of moral duty

is less accurately defined on the principles of the mere light of nature, than on those of revelation, and therefore *unbelievers* could without self-reproach take greater liberties in their conduct than *Christians*; but still there would remain a suspicion, that the Supreme Being, who would hereafter call them to account for their conduct, might judge differently from what they did; and as they would not be able at all times to secure the approbation of their own minds, in their reflections on their conduct, so fully as they could wish to do it, they might dread the more impartial judgment of God. But this apprehension and restraint, to whatever it might amount, would be wholly removed on the supposition of there being no God, no providence, or future state. A vicious unbeliever in revelation would therefore naturally not be displeased on finding the evidence for this belief weaker than he had thought it to be, and rejoice when he could think it to be of no weight at all. And this shews the natural tendency of Deism to Atheism. If a man be an unbeliever in a future state, it is of little or no consequence with respect to his conduct, whether he believe in the being of a God or not; because on that supposition this belief would add nothing to the sanctions of virtue.

Or, supposing the disposition, or bias, that leads a man to infidelity be not a propensity to any kind of vicious indulgence, but only a wish to be considered as a person free from vulgar prejudices, and one who thinks for himself, he will be farther removed from the vulgar by rejecting the belief of a God, a providence, and a future state, than by the rejection of revelation only. If he have any thing of this disposition, which is felt in a greater or less degree by most persons of liberal education, or who have much intercourse with the fashionable world, he will feel more pride and self-complacence in proportion as he recedes farther from the ideas and sentiments of those whose education has been more confined, and who have seen less of the world than he has done.

Lastly, this progress from *Deism* to *Atheism*, must have been greatly favoured by the prevalence of true philosophy, which has led the more intelligent Christians to reject the doctrine of a *soul*, as distinct from the body, and capable of action and enjoyment when separated from it, and to adopt the opinion that, naturally, man is wholly mortal; which is in truth the doctrine of the Scriptures. While it was the universal opinion that the soul of man is naturally imma-

terial, and, of course, immortal, the idea of its surviving the death of the body, and of its existing in some different state, and therefore probably a state of retribution, was unavoidable. Also, the belief of the existence of such a number of spiritual and intelligent beings, was naturally connected with the belief of other immaterial and superior spiritual beings, and also of one *great spirit* presiding over them all, and the Author of all; so that the belief of a soul naturally drew after it that of a God, and of a future state.

But of late it has become almost the universal belief of philosophers, Christians as well as others, that the faculties of perception and thought depend upon a certain organization of the body, and especially of the brain; that when this organization is disordered, all the mental operations are impeded, and consequently that when the corporeal organization is wholly destroyed, there is an end of all sensation and mental action; and therefore that there is no possibility of the restoration of them but in a resurrection of the dead at some future period; and the evidence of this depends altogether on that of revelation. When, therefore, this is disbelieved, all belief in a God and a future state will of course vanish with it.

On both these accounts we may cease to wonder that, whereas the generality of unbelievers were formerly merely *Deists*, they are now generally *Atheists*. This I know to be the case very generally in *England*, but I found it to be much more, I may say universally, so in *France*, when I was there in 1774; when, in consequence of avowing myself to be a Christian, I heard much conversation on the subject.*

This I find confirmed by the author of a *Letter to a Sensible Woman*, which I quoted in the *Preface to my Discourses delivered in Philadelphia*, who says "Theism is an opinion respectable for the genius and the virtues of men who have embraced it," (referring in a note to *Socrates* and *Rousseau*.) "no less than for the advantage which this first step towards reason, on abandoning the prejudices of infancy, has been of to mankind. But after all, it is only a first step; and no persons would stop there, if they would frankly give way to the impulse they have received. No person remains in this intermediate system but through want of reflection, timidity, passion, or obstinacy. Time, experience, and an impartial examination of our ideas, will

* See Vol. I., *Memoirs*, 118; Vol. XV. p. 366.

undeceive us. Voltaire, who was long the apostle of Theism, professed to doubt towards the close of his life, and repented that he had been too confident. Many others have experienced the same.*

It must also be acknowledged that the evidences of natural religion are more difficult to understand, requiring more of what is usually called *metaphysical reasoning*, than those of revealed religion. These, relating wholly to the truth of *historical facts*, require only such proofs and reasoning as men are every day accustomed to attend to, and consequently are the best judges of. But such reasoning as must be used to prove the being and attributes of God, to say nothing of a future state, from the light of nature, is of a very different kind, and much less easy to comprehend.

Indeed, there is one difficulty which, from the nature of the subject, must ever be insurmountable to us. We say that every effect must have a cause, every machine a maker, and that where there are evident marks of design and contrivance, an *end* to be gained, and *means* adapted to it, there must be a *mind*, in which ideas of the fitness of these to one another were formed. We say that this world, and all its parts, the human body, and all our senses, &c. &c. furnish innumerable instances of this, and of the most evident kind; the eye, for example, being formed for seeing, the ear for hearing, the hands for handling, &c., and that many of these parts conspire to the same end; whence we deduce the well-grounded opinion of the necessity of a maker, a being possessed of power and wisdom equal to the execution of such a piece of workmanship. But because we cannot give any account of the origin of this Being, the *Athiest* says, we may as well rest where we are, and content ourselves with saying, that the world had no maker, as that the author of it had none. Whereas they say that it is easy to account for the popular belief of a God from the circumstances in which men have been placed.

M. Volney, treating of the *origin of the idea of a God*, says, that "it first arose from men being sensible that they were subject to various powers and influences which they could not controul, residing in the several parts of nature, to which, judging by a comparison of the exertion of the powers of which they were themselves possessed, they ascribed intelligence and volition. In this manner, the visible universe was soon filled with gods of different dis-

* Letter, p. 25. (P.) See Vol. XVI. pp. 8, 9.

positions, some benevolent, and others malevolent with respect to man.* Thus," he says, "religion, which was an arbitrary idea, without any influence on the relations of men to one another, was only a vain homage rendered to the visible powers of nature,†" among which the sun, the moon, and the stars, were the most conspicuous.

"After this," he says, "men proceeded to worship the symbols of these powers, and pursuing the same idea, they supposed the whole world to be animated, by a principle similar to that which animates man and other animals, which they made to be the element of fire, the vital principle of the whole universe. And last of all, they got the idea of the world being a *machine*, and therefore of its requiring a *maker* distinct from it." "At this epocha," he says, "superficial minds, losing the thread of the ideas which had directed the former profound researches, or ignorant of the facts which served for their foundation, overturned all their conclusions by the introduction of a new and strange chimera. They pretended that this universe, these heavens, these stars, this sun, was only a machine of the ordinary kind. And on this hypothesis applying a comparison drawn from the works of art, they raised an edifice of the most chimerical sophisms. A machine, they say, cannot make itself. It had a pre-existent artificer. It points him out by its own existence. The world is a machine, and therefore there exists a maker of it. In vain did the ancient philosophers object, that the artificer himself had need of relations, and of an author; and they had only to add one step more to the ladder, by taking eternity from the world, and giving it to him."‡

* *Ruines*, p. 213. (P.) "L'homme, méditant sur sa condition, commença de s'apercevoir qu'il étoit soumis à des forces supérieures à la sienne, et indépendantes de sa volonté.—Considérant l'action des éléments sur lui, il conclut de sa part une idée de faiblesse, d'assujettissement, et de la leur une idée de puissance, de domination; et cette idée de puissance fut le type primitif et fondamental de toute idée de la Divinité.—L'univers, pour les premiers hommes, fut rempli de dieux innombrables. Et de ce que les idées de la Divinité eurent pour moteurs les affections du cœur humain, elles subirent un ordre de division calqué sur ses sensations de douleur et de plaisir, d'amour ou de haine; les puissances de la nature, les dieux, les génies furent partagés en bienfaisans ou en malfaisans, en bons et mauvais." *Ibid.* pp. 213, 215, 216.

† *Ibid.* p. 216. (P.) "La religion, idée arbitraire, sans influence sur les rapports des hommes entre eux, n'étoit qu'un vain hommage rendu aux puissances visibles de la nature." *Ibid.* pp. 216, 217.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 258. (P.) "A cette époque, des esprits superficiels, perdant le fil des idées qui avoient dirigé ces études profondes, ou ignorant les faits qui leur servoient de base, en dénaturèrent tous les résultats par l'introduction d'une chimère étrange et nouvelle. Ils prétendirent que cet univers, ces cieux, ces astres, ce soleil, n'étoient qu'une machine d'un genre ordinaire; et à cette première hypothèse, appliquant une comparaison tirée des ouvrages de l'art, ils élevèrent l'édifice des sophismes les plus bizarres.

"'Une machine,' dirent-ils, 'ne se fabrique point elle-même: elle a un ouvrier

“The innovators,” he says, “not content with this first paradox, passed to a second, and applied to their artificer the theory of the human understanding. They pretended that the artificer had made his machine upon a *plan* or *ideas* existing in his own mind.”* “Thus,” he adds, “the divinity was become at last a chimerical and abstract Being, a scholastic subtlety, a substance without form, a body without figure, a true delirium of the mind, of which reason cannot comprehend any thing at all.”†

We acknowledge that both the Deity himself and the manner of his existence are incomprehensible by us; but nevertheless we say that the *eye* must have had a maker as well as the *telescope*, which is an instrument of a similar nature, extending the power of sight, whatever difficulty we may find with respect to the maker of the eye. We may not be able to go any farther, but so far we cannot help going. From the nature of the subject, however, the Atheist may argue too plausibly for the Deist to be able to return a ready and perfectly satisfactory answer.

As to the evidence of a future state from the light of nature, modern unbelievers make very light of it indeed. “Man,” says M. *Volney*, “curious about every thing of which he is ignorant, and fond of a long existence, had inquired concerning what would become of him after his death, because he had very early reasoned upon the principle of life, which animates his body, and which leaves it without disfiguring it. And because he had got an idea of attenuated substances, phantoms and shadows, he was fond of believing that he should continue, in a world under ground, that life which he was too unwilling to part with; and the infernal regions were a commodious situation to receive the dear object which he could not renounce.”‡

antérieur; elle l'indique par son existence. Le monde est une machine: donc il existe un fabricant. Vainement l'ancienne philosophie objecta que l'ouvrier même avoit besoins de *parens* et d'*auteurs*, et que l'on ne faisoit qu'ajouter un échelon, en ôtant l'éternité au monde pour la lui donner.” *Ruines*, p. 258.

* *Ibid.* p. 259. (P.) “Les innovateurs, non contents de ce premier paradoxe, passèrent à un second; et, appliquant à leur *ouvrier* la théorie de l'*entendement* humain, ils prétendirent que le *demi-ourgos* avoit fabriqué sa machine sur un *plan* ou *idée* résidant en son *entendement*.” *Ibid.* pp 258, 259.

† *Ibid.* p. 260. (P.) “C'est ainsi que la Divinité est devenue, en dernier résultat, un être chimérique et abstrait: une *subtilité scolastique* de substance sans forme, de corps sans figure; un vrai délire de l'esprit, auquel la raison n'a plus rien compris.” *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* p. 245. (P.) “L'homme, curieux de tout ce qu'il ignore, et avide d'une longue existence, s'étoit déjà interrogé sur ce qu'il devenoit après sa mort; parce qu'il avoit de bonne heure raisonné sur le principe de *rien* qui anime son corps, qui s'en sépare sans le déformer, et qu'il avoit imaginé les substances déliées, les fantômes, les ombres; il aima à croire qu'il continueroit, dans le monde souterrain,

He then, in the person of an imaginary speaker, whom he makes to be the *Lama*, says, "Behold, Persians, how, into the *visible* and *real*, has been introduced your *invisible* and *imaginary* world. Behold the origin of your abodes of pleasure and pain of which you have formed your *world restored to its youth*, your city of resurrection, placed under the equator. Behold, O Jews and Christians, the disciples of the Persians, whence are come your Jerusalem in the Apocalypse, your paradise, your heaven."*

We readily acknowledge that the Heathens might originally come at their ideas of a future state in some such manner as M. *Volney* here describes; and this may have been the origin of the philosophical doctrine of a *soul*. But revelation supplies us with a very different and better foundation for it; and more agreeable to the principles of true philosophy. Nothing is said in the Scriptures of an *immaterial soul*, distinct from the body, or of its happiness or misery in an intermediate state; but of the whole man rising to life at a future period. This is announced to us by a messenger sent from God, who worked the most evident miracles as a proof of his mission, especially raising several persons from a state of death to life, and exposing himself to be put to death in the most public and indisputable manner, and rising again at a fixed time. And it is not possible to require evidence more satisfactory than this.

There are some traces of the doctrine of a resurrection having been known to the Heathens in the more early ages; and if so, it must have been derived from the tradition of some revelation made to their ancestors, perhaps the first parents of the human race. The custom of burying utensils, and also that of killing men and animals at the tombs of persons, which was in use in several ancient nations, and is used by some at this day, could only have arisen from an idea that the same things that were useful to men in this world would be equally useful to them in another. It must therefore, in their ideas, be such a life as the present, and not that of an unembodied spirit. "Some of the *Arabs*," Mr. Sale says, "believed in a resurrection; and among

cette vie qu'il lui coutoit trop de perdre; et les lieux infernaux furent un emplacement commode pour recevoir les objets chéris auxquels il ne pouvoit renoncer." *Ruines*, pp. 245, 246.

* *Ibid.* p. 249. (P.) "Voilà comme s'est introduit dans le monde visible et réel, un monde invisible et imaginaire; voilà l'origine de ces lieux de délices et de peines, dont vous, *Perses*! avez fait votre terre rajeunie, votre ville de résurrection placée sous l'équateur, avec l'attribut singulier que les heureux n'y donneront point d'ombre. Voilà, *Juifs* et *Chrétiens*, disciples des *Perses*! d'où sont venus votre *Jérusalem* de l'Apocalypse, votre paradis, votre ciel." *Ibid.*

them were those, who when they died had their camel tied by their sepulchre, and so left without meat or drink, to perish, and accompany them to the other world, lest they should be obliged at the resurrection to go on foot, which was reckoned very scandalous.* *Mahomet* himself retained so much of this doctrine, that in his *Koran* he never supposed the virtuous to be rewarded, or the vicious punished, before the general resurrection.†

M. Volney's account of the primitive condition of man, without any known author or guide, is not a little curious. He says "it is a sufficient answer to all systems which suppose the interposition of a God, in the origin of the world, "that man receives all his ideas by means of his senses,"‡ that "at his origin man was formed naked, with respect to body and mind, thrown by accident upon the earth, confused and savage, an orphan abandoned by the unknown power which produced him. He found no being descended from the heavens to inform him of his wants, which he learns only from his senses, or of his duties, which arise only from his wants. Like other animals, without experience of the past, or foresight of the future, he wandered in the midst of the forest, guided and governed by the affections of his nature. By the pain of hunger he was led to his food, and to provide for his sustenance; by the intemperature of the air he wished to cover his body, and he made himself clothes; by the attraction of pleasure he approached a being like himself, and perpetuated his species."§

M. Volney did not, surely, consider that the first man, let him have had a maker, or no maker; let him have dropped from the clouds, or have risen out of the earth; let him have been produced in a state of infancy, or of manhood; yet that, without instruction, he must have perished

* *Introd. to Koran*, p. 27. (P.) † See Vol. XVI. p. 237.

‡ *Ruines*, p. 211. (P.) "De ce que l'homme n'acquiert et ne reçoit d'idées que par l'intermède de ses sens, il suit avec évidence, que toute notion qui s'attribue une autre origine que celle de l'expérience et des sensations, est la supposition erronée d'un raisonnement postérieur." *Ibid.* See *Appendix*, No. II.

§ *Ibid.* p. 34. (P.) "Dans l'origine, l'homme formé nud de corps et d'esprit, se trouva jeté au hasard sur la terre, confuse et sauvage: orphelin délaissé de la puissance inconnue qui l'avoit produit, il ne vit point à ses côtés des êtres descendus des cieux, pour l'avertir de besoins qu'il ne doit qu'à ses sens, pour l'instruire de devoirs qui naissent uniquement de ses besoins. Semblable aux autres animaux, sans expérience du passé, sans prévoyance de l'avenir, il erra au sein des forêts, guidé seulement et gouverné par les affections de sa nature: par la douleur de la faim, il fut conduit aux alimens, et il pourvut à sa subsistance; par les intempéries de l'air, il désira de couvrir son corps, et il se fit des vêtements; par l'attrait d'un plaisir puissant, il s'approcha d'un être semblable à lui, et il perpétua son espèce." *Ibid.*

before he could, by his own sensations and experience, have acquired knowledge enough to preserve his life; The pain of hunger would have come upon him long before he could have learned to walk, or have got the use of any of his limbs; and the more full grown he was at the time of his production, the more difficult would his learning to walk, or even to crawl, have been. Man, therefore, must have had a *guide* as well as a *maker*; and divine interposition was absolutely necessary at his entrance into life. M. *Volney's* idea was evidently that of a *Robinson Crusoe*, thrown upon an uninhabited island, with all the knowledge that he had acquired in the course of his former life. His primitive man must have been produced with the instinctive knowledge of a gardener at least. He must have been able to distinguish fruits that were wholesome from those that were noxious, and have got, by some means or other, the use of his limbs, his eyes, and other senses, before it would have been in his power to avail himself of that knowledge.

Let M. *Volney* consider what he himself, with his present strength of muscles, and acuteness of intellect, could have done, in the situation of his primitive man. Let him have been left on the earth in ever so favourable a climate, and in ever so warm and comfortable a place, so as to want no clothing, yet, having no ideas but such as he got by the impression of the objects around him, he would have been no better than a great sprawling infant. By the stimulus of light he would have opened and shut his eyes, but would have had no idea of the relative distances of any objects. The nearest tree, the remotest hill, and even the heavenly bodies would have seemed to be in the same *plane* and all contiguous to him. He might have moved his arms and legs in an automatic manner, but he would not have been able to rise from the ground. He would have felt the pain of hunger; but though the most proper food should have happened to be ever so near to him, he could not have known, without experience, that eating would remove that pain. He would therefore have lain a helpless prey to the first wild beast, if there were any, that should have happened to find him. If it should have happened that a female, of the same size, had been produced at the same time, and have been dropped by another accident, (the chance of which must have been very small indeed,) ever so near him; being equally ignorant, they would have been equally helpless, and must soon have perished together, without any perpe-

tuation of the species. All would have been to begin again, and to no better purpose.

If M. *Volney* will give himself time to think a little more closely on this important subject, he will find that Divine interpositions must have been necessary at least at the formation of man, or that his formation would have been in vain; and if they were necessary then, they may have been expedient, since that time. *Moses's* account of the primitive state of man, though not without its difficulties, is certainly much more probable than that of M. *Volney*. Indeed, no *hypothesis* can well be more improbable than his.

Some will say that as *Deism* leads to *Atheism*, *Socinianism* leads to *Deism*; and it cannot be denied that there are many instances of this transition, nor is it at all extraordinary that this should be the case. Many Christians from being *Calvinists* became *Arminians*, from *Arminians* *Arians*, and from *Arians* *Socinians*, from a disposition to throw off the yoke of authority, and to shew that they have divested themselves of the prejudices of education, or from a love of truth and a spirit of inquiry, not accompanied with an equal love of virtue, or a serious attention to a future state. And if these states of mind have had much influence in these changes of sentiment, they will naturally tend to lead them farther, even to *Deism* and *Atheism*.

But where freedom of thinking is joined to real piety, and a sense of the value of revelation, as that which alone can give us any assurance of a future state, the difference between *Socinianism* and *Deism* (which is now seen to be intimately connected with *Atheism*) will appear to be infinitely greater, and of a much more serious nature, than any of the differences of opinion preceding it, and therefore will not be so lightly passed. The difference between the belief of a future state, which is common to all the various denominations of Christians, and the total rejection of it, which necessarily follows the disbelief of revelation, is such as must affect a thinking and serious mind unspeakably more than any other difference of opinion whatever. The feeling of this, joined to the greater clearness of the evidences of revelation, will prevent any truly serious persons from passing that boundary. This opinion will appear harsh and uncharitable in some particular cases; but it agrees with my own observation as far as it goes, so that I can say, as before, with Dr. Hartley, that "infidelity is never found to consist with an exalted piety and devotion to God."

As to *Voltaire*, *D'Alembert*, *M. Volney*, and almost all the modern unbelievers whose writings I have perused, (and there are none of any note that I have not read with the best attention that I can give to them,) they appear to bear such evident marks of prejudice, a disposition to cavil, an indifference, to say the least, to several essential articles of sound morality, and a contempt of devotion, though the noblest attainment of man, and so little desire of that greatest of all objects, a future life, that I cannot help considering their opinions on any subject relating to religion, and especially revelation, as of little value, how highly soever I may think (and I am disposed to think very highly) of their abilities in other respects.

SECTION X.

General Observations on the Prevalence of Infidelity.

ARDENTLY as the zealous Christian must wish for the extension of his religion, and the universal prevalence of those principles which he conceives calculated to enlighten his own mind, to cheer his heart under all the vicissitudes of life, and to give him hope even in death, and much as he will, consequently, lament the prevalence of principles which have an opposite tendency, yet, upon a more extensive view of the subject, he will see no reason to be disturbed, or alarmed, at the present aspect of things.

The prevalence of infidelity, great as it certainly is, can never be universal. Admitting revealed religion to be ever so ill-founded, no better, for example, than the Heathenism of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, yet being the faith of the bulk of the *common people* in all countries called Christian, and they having a strong attachment to it, it may be taken for granted that they will long continue to believe it; since it is universally true that the common people, who receive their opinions and practices from their ancestors, and are little disposed to speculate, are very backward to change them, and retain them a long time after the more thinking and inquisitive abandon them. This we see to be the case even when the new religion has something the most inviting to offer in the place of the system that is to be given up. *Heathenism* continued in many villages of the *Roman* empire six hundred years after the promulgation of Chris-

tianity.* But as modern *unbelievers* do not pretend to have any thing to propose as an equivalent to what the Christian must abandon, it may be expected to continue much longer in the world, and independently of any rational evidence in its favour.

But the rational Christian, having no doubt of the truth of his religion, is confident that it will finally prevail, and by its own evidence, when it comes to be attended to, bear down all opposition. It will be sufficient to all impartial persons, even those who have not the leisure, or the means, of entering into the historical investigation themselves, that the truly intelligent, the inquisitive, the candid, and the virtuous, will be the friends of revelation; and that the firm belief of it tends to form a character superior to that of *unbelievers*, inspiring a dignity and elevation of mind incompatible with any thing mean or base.

The true Christian, having a constant respect to God, a providence, and a future state, feels himself less interested in the things that excite the avarice, the ambition, and other base passions of men; and consequently his mind, elevated by devotion, more easily expands itself into universal benevolence, and all the heroic virtues that are connected with it. The Christian, believing that every thing under the government of God will have a glorious termination, in universal virtue and universal happiness, easily yields himself the willing instrument in the hands of Providence, for so great a purpose; and considering himself as, with the apostle, [2 Cor. vi. 1,] *a worker together with God*, he will live a life of habitual devotion and benevolence; sentiments which are inconsistent with a propensity to sensual and irregular indulgence.

On the other hand, the generality of unbelievers will appear to be persons to whom the subject of religion is, on some account or other, unpleasant; who, therefore, give but little attention to it or its evidences, and therefore cannot be deemed competent judges of them, whatever be their ability or knowledge in other respects. A great proportion of them, it cannot be denied, are also profligate and licentious in their manners; and seldom or never looking to God, or a providence, they must have their views greatly contracted, and of course shew other symptoms of a little and narrow mind.

If any person will say that the principles of Christianity

* See Vol. IX. p. 59.

tend not to elevate, but to debase the human character, I cannot help, from my own very different views of things, concluding his mind is under some very improper influence, such as prevents his forming a true judgment in one of the clearest of cases. If he be capable of understanding Hartley's *Theory of the Mind*, he may see what I have advanced on this subject demonstrated, as far as any thing relating to the affections of the mind is capable of demonstration. He may see the pleasures of *sensation, imagination, ambition, self-interest, sympathy, theopathy*, and the *moral-sense*, rise in due gradation, and the three last-mentioned to coalesce and absorb the former, as the human character advances in excellence; the consequence of which is a capacity for higher and more durable gratifications with respect to a man's self, and superior qualifications and dispositions for communicating happiness to others.

Also, the great views opened to us in revelation, and in revelation only, are necessary, as I have shewn in my "Discourses on the Evidence of Revealed Religion," to enlarge the comprehension of the human mind,* and thereby to give us the same kind of superiority over other men, that men in general have over brutes. Unbelievers in revelation and a future state, will have very little inducement to think of God, or of a providence; and consequently, with very few exceptions, they become not only practical, but speculative Atheists. It is impossible, therefore, that they should attain that state of *habitual devotion*, or that constant regard to God, that lively sense of his intimate presence with them, and government over them, which is necessary to great excellence of character, and which has an intimate connexion with the most disinterested and active benevolence.†

I am far, however, from being unwilling to acknowledge, that there are many persons, of whose understandings I have the highest opinion, but whose objects of attention have been wholly different from mine, who will be so far from concurring with me in this opinion, of the superiority of the Christian character, that they will treat it with contempt; and unless all their habits of living and thinking, which go together, could be reversed, there is no prospect of leading them to entertain different ideas. In this case there is no

* See Vol. XV. pp. 199—206.

† See my two *Discourses*, on *Habitual Devotion*, and the *Duty of not Living to Ourselves*, in a volume of *Discourses on Various Subjects*. (P.) Vol. XV. pp. 104—146.

remedy. We must continue to differ. They will make light of my opinion on the subject, and I shall consider them with compassion; hoping, however, that in a future period of their existence, even *they* will come to feel and think as I do, and that we shall all see reason to rejoice in reflecting on the wonderful, but eventually successful methods, by which such a glorious catastrophe will have been brought about.

Considering the many disadvantages under which the defence of Christianity now labours, especially from a prevailing aversion to the subject, and a consequent indisposition to give that attention to its evidences which the importance of it requires; seeing so many excellent defences of it pass unheeded, or without any considerable effect, except confirming the faith of those who are already Christians; I say, judging from this aspect of things, I am inclined to think that the final triumph which is destined for the Christian religion, and which is the subject of so many prophecies, will not be left to be accomplished by the slow process of argumentation, (which, however, would, no doubt, produce the same effect in a sufficient length of time,) but by another age of miracles, more illustrious than any that have yet been displayed, and which is also the subject of several prophecies, especially that of *Joel*,* quoted by Peter on the day of Pentecost, which I do not think has yet had its proper accomplishment. *Ch. ii. 28*: "It shall come to pass in the last day, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh," &c., and that this glorious time will be preceded by the personal appearance of Christ descending in the clouds of heaven, and coming to exercise his proper kingdom.

This second coming of Christ, and the commencement of the *Millenium*, we are led by a whole series of prophecies

- * "And it shall come to pass afterward
That I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh:
 And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy;
 Your old men shall dream dreams;
 Your young men shall see visions;
 And also upon the men-servants, and upon the hand-maids,
 In those days will I pour out my spirit.
 And I will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth,
 Blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke.
 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,
 Before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come.
 But it shall come to pass *that* whosoever shall call on the name of Jehovah
 shall be delivered."

Ch. ii. 28—32, Newcome. See Vol. XII. pp. 356, 357;
 Vol. XIII. pp. 392, 393.

to expect immediately after the overthrow of the present European monarchies, which are evidently tottering to their base. Judging also by what we see, there is no prospect of the general conversion of the Jews but in such a manner as the apostle *Paul* was converted, that is, by the personal appearance of Christ himself;* when, and not before, they will say, (*Matt. xxiii. 39.*) “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.”

According to the same spirit of prophecy, the destruction of Popery, or Paul’s *man of sin*, is not to be effected but by the appearance of Christ himself, and this event may not be very distant. In short, all things seem to be approaching in an extraordinary manner, but by the operation of natural causes, to the very state that was foretold so many ages ago, as to precede those glorious and happy times, when “the whole earth,” (*Isa. xi. 9.*) will be filled with “the knowledge of the Lord;” when there will be, though in fact here below, (*2 Pet. iii. 13.*) “new heavens and a new earth, *in which will dwell* righteousness.”

In the mean time *Christianity* will serve to discriminate the characters of men. It will in general be cheerfully embraced by the worthiest and the best of men, and it will be the means of making them worthier and better, while it will be rejected by the unworthy; and this rejection, accompanied with a less restrained indulgence of their appetites, and their giving with more eagerness into a variety of worldly pursuits, will tend to debase their character still more. And, from the knowledge that I have of men, it is evident to me that this is the case, in fact.

That Christianity should have this twofold effect is not extraordinary. It is necessarily the case, in the wise plan of Providence, with every other means of virtuous improvement. Neither prosperity nor adversity are ever sent in vain, never leaving any man as they found him, but always making him either better or worse. Prosperity may either make a man more grateful to God, and more benevolent to man; or it may make him proud, insolent, and unfeeling; and adversity may either make him humble and resigned, or fretful, peevish, and malevolent.

The intelligent Christian will also see a valuable purpose answered by the present prevalence of infidelity. It is a striking fulfilment of the prophecies of our Saviour, who,

* See, on *Rev. xx. 6*, Vol. XIV. pp. 502—506.

though he foretold that his church should never fail, likewise intimated that, at his second coming, he should not find much faith (or a general belief and expectation of his coming) in the earth. It is likewise a confirmation of what the apostles have written concerning the apostacy of the latter days. In the mean time, the prevalence of infidelity is the most efficacious means of purifying our religion from the abuses and corruptions which at present debase it, and especially of overturning the civil establishments of Christianity in all Christian countries, whereby the kingdom of Christ has been made a kingdom of this world, having been made subservient to the corrupt policy of men, and in every respect the reverse of what it originally was.

Thus are *unbelievers* employed by Divine Providence to reform the Christian church. They will do it far more effectually than any of its friends would have done; and this will pave the way for its universal prevalence hereafter. Thus the corruptions and abuses of Christianity produce infidelity, and this infidelity is the means, in the wise order of Providence, of the complete cure of those corruptions and abuses, with only a temporary and partial injury to that religion, of which they are so great an incumbrance.

SECTION XI.

Advice to rational Christians respecting the present Prevalence of Infidelity.

As I intend this publication chiefly for the use of *Christians*, and the circumstances in which we find ourselves are in a great measure new, and peculiarly interesting, I shall close the work with some advice respecting our conduct in them; and I shall comprise the whole under four heads.

1. In this state of the open rejection of Christianity, by so many persons of the most conspicuous characters, it is the peculiar duty of every Christian to make the most open profession of his religion, without being moved by the apostacy of ever so great a number, or the obloquy, or ridicule, to which he may be exposed on that account; remembering the awful denunciation of our Saviour, (*Mark viii. 38.*) “Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words—of him also *will* the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels.”

In order to make this open profession of Christianity to

the most advantage, it is necessary that Christians should assemble for the purpose of *public worship*, though in the smallest numbers; letting it be known that there is such worship, and that others may attend if they please. A Christian who is not known to be such, except by the general uprightness of his conduct, will, no doubt, be respected, but not as a Christian. It will not be known on what principles he acts, and therefore others will be but little wiser or better by his means. But a Christian church, a number of persons regularly meeting as such, to encourage and edify one another, reading the Scriptures, and administering Christian ordinances, is, as our Saviour said, [*Matt. v. 14,*] “a city set on a hill,” which “cannot be hid;” and when *our light thus shines before men*, others will not only *see our good works*, but also the principles from which they proceed, and thus be led to *glorify our Father who is in heaven*. For the same reason, when a spurious and corrupt Christianity is most prevalent, the more intelligent Christians should separate themselves, and form other societies for public worship, that *unbelievers* may have an opportunity of judging between them, and not be led to take it for granted that there is no Christianity, but such as they perhaps justly reject.

2. Every Christian should, as far as possible, make himself master of the arguments in favour of his religion, that he may appear not to be governed by a principle of implicit faith, but, as the apostle *Peter* says, (1 *Ep. iii. 15,*) “be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh *him* a reason of the hope that is in *him*.” And the main argument for the truth of Christianity (but from the discussion of which all *unbelievers* have hitherto shrunk) is very plain and intelligible. It is the certain belief of the great facts on which it is founded, by those who must have known the truth of the case, and who were most nearly interested to ascertain it. If, on such undeniable evidence, it be true, that Christ wrought real miracles, that he died and rose from the dead, the Christian religion is true; and we may depend upon it that, according to his repeated declarations, he will come again, to raise all the dead, to judge the world, and to give to every man according to his works, (which is all that is of most consequence in Christianity,) whatever *unbelievers* may find to object to the system in other respects.

3. But we should most carefully bear in mind, that in the defence of Christianity, as in our whole conduct, we should

shew a disposition worthy of it. Besides that uniform superiority of mind to this world, which removes us to the greatest distance from every thing mean and base; besides that spirit of habitual devotion and universal benevolence which raises the human character to the highest pitch of moral excellence, (of the most important elements of which, *unbelievers*, who have not the enlarged views that Christianity opens to us, are necessarily destitute,) let our behaviour towards unbelievers themselves be the reverse of what theirs generally is towards Christians, and which is so conspicuous in the writings of *Voltaire* and others. Let there be nothing in it of their sarcastic turn of mind, which implies both contempt and malevolence. Let it be with that *meekness* and *benevolence* which the apostles so strongly recommended, 1 *Peter* iii. 15; 2 *Tim.* ii. 25. Let every thing we say on the subject, or do with respect to it, discover the greatest good-will and friendly concern for those who differ from us, though in a matter of so much consequence. Let us consider them as persons who are unhappily misled by false views of things, and whom, if they be of a candid disposition, a juster view will set right, but whom an angry or contemptuous opposition would irritate, and alienate more than ever.

Let us regard Christianity itself as only a means of virtue and moral improvement, and therefore let us rejoice if infidelity do not, (as, however, it is too apt to do,) lead men into vice. *Unbelievers* may be men of decent and valuable characters, though destitute of the more sublime virtues which give the greatest dignity to human nature, and fit them in a more eminent manner for the peculiar employment, and the peculiar happiness, of a future state. Let us also indulge the pleasing hope, that hereafter, though not at present, their minds, if not essentially depraved, wanting only that farther *light* which will irresistibly burst upon them hereafter, they will be every thing that we can wish for them, and therefore that, though we differ at present, we shall some time hence rejoice together. We are all brethren, children of the same Father; and though differing ever so much in other respects, should regard and love one another as such. Besides, how can we shew our superiority, or greater comprehension of mind, arising from a habit of attending to great and distant objects, and looking beyond ourselves, but by greater meekness, forbearance, candour, and benevolence towards men, as well as by greater resignation, and habitual devotion with

respect to God, and a greater command over our appetites and passions in general?

We should ever bear in mind that superior knowledge implies superior obligations. As to believe in a God, and yet *live as without God in the world*, is worse than being an *Atheist*; so to profess Christianity, while its principles have no influence upon us, not improving our dispositions and conduct, is much worse than not to believe it at all. A profligate *unbeliever* is much more excusable than a worldly-minded, immoral Christian, a Christian destitute of candour and benevolence.

4. Christians surrounded by *unbelievers*, perhaps without any opportunity of attending public worship, and the received custom of the times excluding the mention of any thing relating to *religion* in conversation, should be careful to confirm and strengthen their own faith by a voluntary attention to the principles and evidences of it. Faith, as Dr. Hartley has shewn, admits of degrees; and between a merely *rational faith*, or the simple assent of the mind to a speculative truth, and *practical faith*, or that cordial reception of it which warms the heart and influences the conduct, the difference is almost infinite. The former, as it respects Christianity, is of very little value, as we see in the generality of Christians, who being wholly immersed in the affairs of the world, and giving little or no attention to their Christian principles, are little, if at all, the better for them. Nay, they are the more criminal on this account; being possessed of so great a treasure, and making no proper use of it. The latter only is that faith which the apostle says, *works by love*, which purifies the heart, and reforms the life; and it cannot be formed and kept up in the actual circumstances of life, without great and unremitted attention.

A person, therefore, who wishes to be a Christian to any good purpose, must make it his daily practice to read the Scriptures, and other books which tend to interest him in their contents. Much of the time that his necessary business, whatever it be, allows for reading, he will, with peculiar satisfaction, devote to *this*; and he will not satisfy himself with saying that, having once read the Scriptures, and well enough remembering their general contents, he has no occasion to look into them any more. The consequence of the frequent reading of the Scriptures, and books relating to Christianity, will be, that his religion, or something relating to it, will be the subject to which his thoughts will naturally

turn, whenever the business of life does not call them another way; and even in the midst of business he will have many moments of pleasing and serious reflection, which will have a happy effect in preserving that equanimity which is so desirable amidst the vicissitudes of this life, preventing undue elation in prosperity, and depression in adversity; from that sense of the wise and impartial providence of God superintending all events, and the happy termination to which all things are tending, which this practice will naturally impress upon his mind.

If a Christian have any friends, whose views of things are similar to his own, he will naturally resort to them, and they will strengthen each other's faith, hope, and joy, by conversing on the subject of religion; as persons of the same sentiments and views in politics, inflame their ardour in a common cause by frequent intercourse and conversations. I am even not altogether without hope, that this open rejection of Christianity by such great numbers, and the contempt with which it is treated by them, will operate like persecution of other kinds, and animate the zeal of its rational and steady friends; and also, that this zeal may lead to methods of extending the knowledge of Christianity, and its evidences, to others who are but imperfectly acquainted with them, which may end in the *rechristianizing* of the world, and that on principles better founded, and therefore more stable than ever.

But to effect this desirable end, it is necessary, that Christians make their religion a primary object, and consider every thing relating to this life as subordinate to it; as, if there be a future life, of so much more value than this, they reasonably ought to do. Let "the children of this world," as our Saviour calls them, [*Luke xvi. 8,*] give their whole attention, as they do, to the perishable things of it; but let "the children of light," the heirs of immortality, habitually look above and beyond it, to that *treasure in heaven which faileth not, that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away*, not indeed the object of sense, but of faith, and surely *reserved in heaven for us*.

There is no great danger of leading any person by these representations to make his religion too much an object, so as to neglect the proper business of this life; though, with some persons of a peculiarly melancholy turn of mind, and especially after meeting with misfortunes in life, this has been the case. The constant presence of things *seen and*

temporal, gives them a decided advantage over things *unseen*, though *eternal*, especially in these times, in which all monkish maxims are justly exploded, and the duties of all intelligent Christians connect them with the world and the business of it; so that we cannot have any serious apprehension of this inconvenience, which, however, it is proper to guard against. Indeed, I cannot conceive that any of those whom I call *rational Christians*, whose religion is free from the gross absurdities that have long prevailed in the Christian world, and which have brought it into the state of discredit in which it now is, are in any danger of this extreme; and these are the only persons by whom I have any expectation that an address from *me* will be attended to.

Lastly, let the *rational Christian*, who justly disclaims such doctrines as those of *original sin*, *arbitrary predestination*, the *Trinity*, and *vicarious satisfaction*, as the grossest corruptions of his religion, and the principal cause of its present rejection, (and which on this account his regard for Christianity requires that he should take every opportunity of exposing,) be equally prepared to meet the too vehement zeal of the defenders of these doctrines, (who are at present the great majority of the nominally Christian world,) persons who will not scruple to treat him as a *Deist*, or *Atheist*; and also the hatred of the real Deists and Atheists of the age. For if he be zealous and active in promoting what he deems to be pure Christianity, their sentiments concerning him will not deserve a softer name. However, the malignity of both are alike insignificant, considering the great object we have in view, and they are infinitely overbalanced by the solid satisfaction which arises from the cordial esteem of a small number of judicious Christian friends, who will approve of our conduct, and join us in it; to say nothing of the exquisite delight which arises from the consciousness of a steady and undaunted pursuit of what is *true* and *right*, the hope we entertain of the approbation of our Maker, and the glorious reward of immortality.*

* For the three articles forming an *Appendix* to the *Observations*, in the *Philadelphia* edition, see the *Appendix* to this Volume, Nos. I. II. III.

LETTERS TO M. VOLNEY,
OCCASIONED BY A WORK OF HIS ENTITLED
Ruins,
AND BY HIS LETTER TO THE AUTHOR.

NUNC OPUS EST LEVIORE LYRA.—Ovid.

[PHILADELPHIA, 1797.]

LETTERS, &c.

LETTER I.

Introductory Matter.

SIR,

THE Letter that you have been pleased to address to me* shews that you are a little out of humour, though I cannot discover any cause of offence that I have given you, besides my controverting the opinions advanced in your book. And yet, since you say that you wrote "only from a spirit of doubt and uncertainty, which appeared to you the best suited to the human mind, and most adapted to its improvement,"† you ought to have been pleased with the discussion which you had invited. You certainly would not have started any opinions which you thought to be of no importance, and it was to these subjects of discussion that I confined my remarks.

If you will please to reconsider the passages which you have quoted, and conceive to be *abusive*, you will not find that, in any of them, I charge you with any bad design, incapacity, or *general* ignorance, but only of the subjects which you undertook to discuss; and this I ascribe to inattention only. If I had thought meanly of your understanding, I should not have classed you, as I have done, with *Voltaire* and *D'Alembert*, who are among the first, if not the very first, and the most admired, of your writers: nor indeed should I have troubled you with any notice at all.

If any person should advance that there never existed such a person as *Alexander the Great* or *Julius Caesar*, would

* This *Letter*, of 15 octavo pages, is dated *Philadelphia*, March 10, 1797. It is probable that *Volney* wrote in *French*, and procured the translation, as he says, of Dr. Priestley's "mother tongue" (p. 8), that it was one which he could "scarcely lisp." The *Letter* has the following title: "*Volney's Answer to Doctor Priestley, on his Pamphlet entitled 'Observations upon the Increase of Infidelity, with Animadversions upon the Writings of several Modern Unbelievers, and especially the Ruins of M. Volney, with this motto: Minds of little penetration rest naturally on the surface of things. They do not like to pierce deep into them, for fear of labour and trouble; sometimes still more for fear of truth.'*" [See *supra*, p. 1.] Eh quoi! Mathan! d'un prêtre est ce là le langage? *Racine, Athalie, Act 2.*"

† *Answer*, p. 12. (P.) "By means of the contrasted opinions which I have scattered through it, (the Book of the *Ruins*, it breathes that spirit of doubt and uncertainty which appears to me the best suited to the weakness of the human mind, and the most adapted to its improvement." *Ibid* pp. 12-13

you scruple to say that he was very ignorant of general history; and yet he might be a great mathematician, a natural philosopher, or a moralist. When therefore, I find you treating the history of *Jesus Christ* as a mere fable, whatever I may think of you in other respects, (and I have expressly said that I am disposed to think very highly of you,) I cannot help considering you as ignorant of ecclesiastical history; and if, with my own belief of the truth of the Gospel history, I had used any other term on the occasion, it must have been one much more opprobrious.

If I have inadvertently introduced into my animadversions on your writings any thing of a personal nature, and foreign to the argument, you, Sir, have not been sufficiently careful to avoid following a bad example. For our readers will hardly think that the mention of my large hat, straight hair, or mortified countenance, (which in your note p. 9, you hint to be a mark of *hypocrisy*),* my knowledge or my ignorance of chemistry,† my denying the divinity of Christ,‡ my meeting you in Spruce Street, or dining with you at Mr. Russel's,§ &c. &c., can contribute to throw any light on your argument. To our readers these things are of no consequence at all; nor, excepting a few persons who are acquainted with us, will our names be considered as any thing more than so many letters of the alphabet, yours con-

* See *Volney's* 7th reason, *infra*, to which he annexed the following Note: "Moreover when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast; but thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head and wash thy face. St. *Mattheu*, chap. vi. vers. 16 and 17." *Answer*, p. 9, Note.

† "Mr. Collins, Doctor of Divinity, and Mr. Black, Doctor in Chemistry, met at the coffee-house in Edinburgh: a new theological pamphlet written by Dr. Priestley was thrown upon the table. 'Really,' said Dr. Collins, 'this man had better confine himself to chemistry, for he is absolutely ignorant in theology.' 'I beg your pardon,' answered Dr. Black, 'he is in the right, he is a minister of the gospel, he ought to adhere to his profession, for, in truth, he knows nothing of chemistry.'" *Ibid.* p. 10, Note.

‡ "Such is your artful purpose, that in attacking me as doubting the existence of Jesus, you might secure to yourself, by surprise, the favour of every Christian sect; although your own incredulity in his divine nature is not less subversive of Christianity than the profane opinion, which does not find in history the proof required by the English law to establish a fact." *Ibid.* p. 7.

§ *Volney* complains that Dr. Priestley had *abused* him "in a pamphlet in the year 1792," referring, no doubt, to *Letter IV.* "to the French Philosophers," where "some writers" are charged with "palpable ignorance," for having "denied the very existence of Jesus Christ," and presently *M. Volney* is named. The *Answerer* adds, "After this first abuse, on meeting me here last winter, he procured me to be invited to dine with his friend Mr. Russel, at whose house he lodged; after having shewn me polite attentions at that dinner, he abuses me in his new pamphlet. After this second abuse, he meets me in Spruce Street, and takes me by the hand as a friend, and speaks of me in a large company under that denomination. Now I ask the public, What kind of a man is Dr. Priestley?" *Ibid.* p. 15, Note.

sisting of six letters, and mine of nine. But the things that are truly interesting to our readers, and to all men, are, whether there be any truth in the gospel history, whether there be a God, a providence, or a future state. All these I believe, and you deny; and our readers are interested to know which of us can produce more probable arguments in support of our respective opinions. You have openly avowed your opinions, and yet you shrink from the defence of them.

This is, no doubt, a *religious controversy*; but if you had the dislike that you now express for every thing of this nature, you should not have provoked it. If when you first wrote, you thought yourself, as no doubt you did, sufficiently master of your subject, you are so still, and therefore are able to vindicate what you wrote; and your reputation being more than ever interested, it will be taken for granted, that the only true reason for your silence is a consciousness of your inability to defend what you have advanced, joined with the shame of acknowledging yourself to have been in an error, and not any of the *eight reasons** you have thought proper to allege.

* "1st. Because, to religious quarrels there is no end, since the prejudices of infancy and education almost unavoidably exclude impartial reasoning, and besides the vanity of the champions becomes committed by the very publicity of the contest, never to give up a first assertion; whence result a spirit of sectarism and faction.

"2d. Because no one has a right to ask of me an account of my religious opinions: every inquisition of this kind is a pretension to sovereignty, a first step towards persecution; and the tolerant spirit of this country, which you invoke, has much less in view to engage men to speak, than to invite them to be silent.

"3d. Because supposing I do hold the opinions you attribute to me, I wish not to engage my vanity so as never to retract, nor to deprive myself of the resource of a conversion on some future day after more ample information.

"4th. And because, reverend Sir, if, in the support of your own thesis, you should happen to be discomfited before the Christian audience, it would be a dreadful scandal; and I will not be a cause of scandal, even for the sake of good.

"5th. Because in this metaphysical contest, our arms are too unequal; you speaking in your mother tongue, which I scarcely lisp, might bring forward huge volumes, whilst I could hardly oppose pages; and the public, who would read neither production, might take the weight of books for that of reasonings.

"6th. And because being endowed with the gift of faith, in a pretty sufficient quantity, you might swallow in a quarter of an hour more articles than my logic would digest in a week.

"7th. Because again, if you were to oblige me to attend your sermons, as you have compelled me to read your pamphlet, the congregation would never believe that a man powdered and adorned like any other worldling, could be in the right against a man dressed out in a large hat, with strait hair, and a mortified countenance, although the gospel, speaking of the Pharisees of other times, who were unpowdered, says, that when one fasts he must anoint his head and wash his face. [See *supra*, p. 114, Note *.]

"8th. Because, finally, a dispute to one having nothing else to do, would be a gratification, while to me, who can employ my time better, it would be an absolute loss." *Answer*, pp. 7-9.

You say you have not leisure ; but with your knowledge of the subject, less time than you have employed in writing your letter to me would have sufficed for a proper answer to my arguments. It is evident that you are not deficient either in ability as a writer, or in a reasonable degree of confidence in that ability ; and you have an advantage which I have not, in the predisposition of your readers. For though I consider your book as exceedingly weak in point of argument, it is written in such a manner as to be very captivating to the young and ignorant. Few persons will attend to arguments by which they do not wish to be convinced ; and this will be the case with most young persons, who wish to throw off the restraints of religion. Many are really afraid to read any thing in favour of religion, from a secret suspicion lest the opinions which they have taken up from such writings as yours should be shaken. They wish to have their minds at ease on the subject, and not to have them disturbed. I may preach, but they will not hear ; I may write, but they will not read. But they will read your writings, and those of other *unbelievers*, with an eager desire to be satisfied, and to have the doubts which they cannot wholly conceal from themselves removed. With this disposition they will take pleasure in reading large volumes in favour of the opinions that you have advanced, when they will not have patience to read a small pamphlet written against them. On this account, for one reader that I can expect, you will have ten. But I shall rejoice if by any thing that I can do I can rescue but one person in ten from the influence of principles so fatal to virtue and peace of mind, as I consider yours to be.

You complain of my appearing in the character of your adversary, after our having had some communication as friends, but I am not aware of any inconsistency in this conduct. I never treated you personally with the least disrespect. I only controverted the principles which you openly maintained, and I hope you have not forgotten the old adage, *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato, sed magis amica Veritas*. I have lived on the very best terms with several persons with whom I have had public controversies. This circumstance never occasioned the least abatement or interruption of our friendship ; and by your own account my behaviour to you shewed that I had no idea of being on any other terms with yourself, and though you rejected my overtures, I bear you no ill will. The world, and even this city, is wide enough for us both.

LETTER II.

Of the Tendency of Infidelity.

SIR,

THOUGH you never did me any injury, you have greatly injured many for whom I ought to be concerned; and would not you stop the hand of your nearest friend if he was going to set fire to the house of your neighbour, or even of your enemy? Now your book is one of the fire-brands that I am desirous of quenching. Destitute as it is of any thing approaching to solid argument, yet by the splendour of your imagination, and the fascinating charms of your diction, it confounds the ideas of many young persons. Having little previous knowledge, a disposition too prone to licentiousness, a wish to free themselves from what they call vulgar prejudices, and finding a man of your celebrity and shining talents to have thrown off all the restraints of religion, they, without any capacity to examine your arguments, content themselves with following your example; and the immediate consequence of this is, that, rejecting the belief of a God, of a providence, and of a future state, and looking no farther than the present life, they will consult nothing but their pleasure and their interest in it; and, in my opinion, though not in yours, their minds will, in consequence of it, become radically debased, and they will be ready to follow the prevailing inclination, whatever it be, under the pretence of following their only professed guide, nature.

If an *unbeliever* respect in any degree the good of others, and act a friendly and patriotic part, it must be from the remains of better principles and habits, which it may not be easy for him wholly to eradicate. If you yourself saw a man in a situation in which he might materially benefit himself by injuring you, and without any fear of detection, and you knew that he had no respect to a God, or a future state, you could not have any confidence in his friendship. You would even think him a fool if he did not consult his own interest, at the expense of yours, that of his country, or of the whole world. If he was restrained in these circumstances, it must be from some principle which you would call *prejudice*, and not from cool reason; and as to any species of private indulgence, by which no other person was directly injured, and himself only remotely and uncertainly, you could not hope to lay him under any restraint whatever, though his mind was evidently debased by sen-

sual indulgence, and he was sinking himself to a level with brute beasts. You may lay down rules of morality, as in your *Catechism*, but you cannot supply any sufficient motives for the observance of them.

Happily, a human being cannot wholly brutalize himself. He may believe that he shall die like a brute, but he cannot wholly live like one. He cannot enjoy the unmixed happiness of a pampered brute. He cannot help looking both backwards and forwards, and there is nothing in either prospect that can add to his enjoyment; whereas the prospects of Christians are such that they advance in happiness as they advance in years, and the infirmities of age, and the nearest approaches of death, are no obstruction to it.

The man who enters fully (though but few will be able entirely to do this) into the spirit of infidelity, will have little respect even for the liberal pursuits of science. Expecting to exist but a few years, he will naturally say, What is your *history*, your *philosophy*, or your *astronomy* to me? The thought of death must necessarily abate the ardour of his pursuits; whereas the Christian philosopher, believing that this life is only the infancy of his being, and looking up to the great Author of nature with reverence and joy, will apply himself with peculiar ardour to a pursuit, which he doubts not will be resumed with infinitely more advantage and satisfaction in another state. These noble objects will in time lose their power of amusing the man who believes that he will soon die, and be no more. He will not even read except for the sake of amusement, when his time cannot be filled up with what he will call more substantial pleasures, which with him will only be those of sense. He will get money with no other view; and at length, other gratifications losing their relish, this will become his sole object. And what a despicable being is this! Your principles even tend to extinguish a laudable love of fame. For what is this, when the man shall be no more?

When I see the principles of your writings, and those of many others, doing this essential injury to mankind, and especially to young persons, who are entering on the stage of life, while others of better principles are going off; when I see the race of man, the noblest offspring of God, in danger of being debased, and in a manner brutalized, by your writings, do I not act the part of the friend of mankind, when I endeavour to counteract their effects, though I am sensible that in the present state of things my success will be but small?

But religion is not only the guide of life, but supplies the best support under the troubles of it, and at the approach of death; and of this your principles would deprive men. And what have you to give them in its place? Being a much older man than you,* I have had more experience of the value of religion in this respect than you can have; I have had many trials, and some heavy losses, which have left a void which nothing in the world can fill;† and yet I would not exchange my sorrows for your joys. Were you in my situation, I should regard you with compassion; for I bear you no ill will. Could you, Sir, have the feelings that I sometimes have, you would give all the world, if you had it, to be a Christian.

LETTER III.

Of the Argument for the being of a God.

SIR,

As you seem half disposed to apologize for some of the opinions advanced in your *Ruins*, by intimating that you sometimes expressed the sentiments of others, as those of the *grand lama*, &c., though this mode of writing is now so hackneyed that it deceives nobody, I am willing to accept of the apology, especially with respect to what you have advanced against the being of a God. I do this the more readily, as both in your *Travels*, and in this pamphlet, you indirectly betray your belief of a *Supreme Intelligence*.

In your account of the camel, you say that “nature formed this animal no less hardy and frugal than the soil is sterile and ungrateful;” and that “the nature of this animal was adapted to the climate in which it exists by some disposing intelligence.”‡ In this letter to me you say, “I am induced to believe that the universe is governed by laws of wisdom and justice.§ Indeed so obvious are the marks of design in the wonderful frame of nature, that the most *Atheistical* writers frequently betray a propensity to the belief of a God. For what is *nature*, or a *disposing intelligence*, but God? The terms are different, but the ideas

* Dr. Priestley was now 64, and M. Volney 41. See Vol. XVI. p. 374, *Note*.

† Dr. Priestley, in 1795, had lost his youngest son (see Vol. XV. p. 523, *Note* †); and in September 1796, after an union of 34 years, his affectionate and exemplary wife, to whom *Prov.* xxxi. 28, might have been most suitably applied. See Vol.

Memoirs, 73; Mr. Priestley's *Continuation*, 8vo. pp. 192, 193; 12mo. pp. 173, 174.

‡ *Travels*, p. 239. (P.)

§ *Answer*, p. 14. (P.)

annexed to them are precisely the same. In what this disposing intelligence resides is a secondary question, and so is that concerning the *origin* (if we may so speak) of this great Being. And, difficult as it is to admit the eternity and self-existence of an *all-perfect* being, the only positive alternative, which is that of the self-existence of an *imperfect* being, is more difficult.

You must acknowledge that there exists somewhere a principle of intelligence, equal to the formation of a camel, and the adaptation of his frame, his powers, and his habits, to his situation; because such an animal actually exists. For to suppose an infinite succession of such creatures will not satisfy the mind. Also something must have existed from all eternity, and of course have been uncreated. For, if ever there had been a time in which nothing had existed, every person must be sensible that nothing could ever have existed. We have, therefore, only the choice of two suppositions, viz. that of the eternal succession of such beings as camels and men, evidently incapable of understanding their own structure, and much more of producing it, and that of the eternity, and consequently the self-existence, of a Being of infinite intelligence, and infinite power, equal to the production of every thing that we see. Of the two great difficulties in our conception of things, this is certainly the less. My *hypothesis* will at least account for the facts, but yours cannot do it; the cause not being equal to the visible effects.

If men and animals were formed, as you say in your *Ruins*, by some *unknown power*, and then *dropped by accident* on the earth, why do we not now and then find these original animals in our fields or gardens? Is this unknown power extinct? I hope, therefore, you will no more represent the belief of an intelligent Author of nature, who formed it on a *plan* and *ideas* previously existing in his mind, as more absurd than the adoration of the visible parts of nature, such as the sun, moon, stars, &c.

LETTER IV.

Of the Evidences of Revelation.

SIR,

BEING obliged in the manner described in the preceding letter, to admit the existence of a Supreme Intelligence, the Author of man and of all things, every thing that the system

of revelation supposes must be allowed to be *possible*. For, certainly, this great Being, having made man capable of enjoying an endless existence, and of improving in the whole course of it, *may* have destined him for it; having made him capable of moral government, he may have subjected him to it; and consequently have provided for the reward of his virtues, and the punishment of his vices, in a future state, to which it is unquestionably in his power to raise him. That God has given us the fullest assurance that he *will* do so, we believe on the plainest and most unexceptionable of all evidence, which is that of men's senses, in those works to which Omnipotence only is equal. Of this we have no more doubt than we have of the truth of any historical facts whatever. For till you, Sir, give us some better reasons than you have yet done, for the non-existence of such a person as Jesus Christ, we shall not only believe that there was such a person, but that he wrought real miracles in attestation of his divine mission; that he died and rose again; that many thousands were witnesses of his miracles, living and dying in the firm belief of them, and therefore that they are entitled to our belief as much as if we ourselves had been witnesses of them.

That the strongest evidence will not equally impress all persons, you, Sir, have shewn the fullest proof in yourself, in not admitting the existence of Jesus Christ, and treating the whole of the Gospel history as a fable. The man who can resist the evidence of these historical facts might have done all that the Gospel history relates of the Pharisees and Jewish rulers. It is, indeed, a degree of incredulity of which there are few examples, especially considering that you, Sir, rank with *literati*, and of the first class, and that you have even visited the very countries which were the scenes of the great transactions.

Had any person travelled through *Greece* and *Italy*, as you have done in *Palestine*, and after reading the classic historians, denied that there ever existed such men as *Pericles* or *Julius Cæsar*, *Demosthenes* or *Cicero*, he would not have shewn a more unreasonable incredulity; there being much more evidence of the existence of *Jesus Christ* than of any of the persons I have named. He is mentioned by many more contemporary writers, and by others in every subsequent period, and has left more traces of his existence, which continue to this day. He did not live in an ignorant age, or among an ignorant people. For if you were required to name any time in what may be called *antiquity*,

in which there was the most knowledge, and that knowledge the most generally diffused, it would be the very time of the promulgation of Christianity. The Greek language was then more generally understood and used, than in any period whatever, before or since. The books of the *New Testament*, which were intended for the use of all countries, being all written in *Greek*, is itself a proof of this. And for one person who could read or write in *Greece* or *Italy*, there were probably ten or a hundred who could do so in *Judea*; for long before that time, and to this day, these liberal attainments were common among the Jews.

You are pleased to say, "If you admit with Locke and with us infidels, that every one has the right of rejecting whatever is contrary to his natural reason; and that all our ideas, and all our knowledge, is acquired only by the inlets of our external senses, what becomes of the system of revelation, and of that order of things in times past which is so contradictory to that of the time present? unless we consider it as a dream of the human brain during the state of superstitious ignorance. With these two single phrases," you add, "I could overturn the whole edifice of your faith."* I do not, however, wish it to stand on any other or better foundation. Did *Moses* or *Jesus* appeal to any thing else than the reason and the external senses of men? Is it not by the use of the same eyes and ears that we judge of supernatural, as we do of natural events? And how does it appear that miracles, by which the Supreme Being may choose to evidence his interposition, is any contradiction to the present order of things, when both may be true? Where is the contradiction in saying that miracles were wrought at one time, and not at another; in one place, and not at another?

You say, that you have opened "the book of nature, a more authentic one, and more easy to be read than leaves of paper blackened over with Greek or Hebrew."† Now, I think you must have opened this book of nature to little purpose, not to have discovered, more clearly than you have done, the Author of nature; and, though a book written in *Greek* or *Hebrew* may be, and I believe is, unintelligible to you; it speaks to those who understand those tongues, a more intelligible language on the important subject of morals than the book of nature.

But what evidence have you given of your having studied this book of nature? I have not heard of any thing that you

* *Answer*, p. 11. (P.)

† *Ibid*, p. 14. (P.)

have read, or discovered, in it. My studies have been pretty equally divided between that book and another, which, I doubt not, is from the same author, bearing equal marks of wisdom, and having the same great object, the moral instruction of mankind.

There is one part of the book of nature to which I suspect that you have given but little attention, and that is *human nature*, and the springs of human actions; the affections and conduct of men being regulated by as certain and uniform laws as any other phenomena in nature. If, Sir, you have any knowledge of this kind, please to apply it to the case of the *Hebrew* nation in the time of *Moses*, and of *Jesus*, if you believe that such a nation ever existed; and say by what principles they were actuated who lived and died in the profession of what required no *reasoning*, but only the evidence of their eyes and ears, many of whom suffered the greatest extremities rather than abandon a faith so founded, if the facts to which they gave their testimony never happened. Do you find any such men at this day, or in any other period? If you can believe that any beings in the form and with the feelings of men, could act as they did, without there being any truth in those facts, you have more faith, and believe more extraordinary miracles than I do.

LETTER V.

The several Articles in Dispute reduced to the Form of Queries.

SIR,

As you have not only written a book of *theological controversy*, from your own inclination to the subject, and for the instruction of mankind, but have also vouchsafed to make some kind of reply to my answer to it, you may be induced to get over the eight reasons for your declining to prosecute the subject, and reply again. With this hope, I shall take the liberty, in imitation of your numbered paragraphs, to point out distinctly what you have to do. And as you say you do not always speak in your own person, continue to do as you have done. Let it be sometimes *the grand lama* that speaks, and sometimes *M. Volney*, and we will distinguish between them as well as we can.

1. Please to give us your reasons for supposing the God of *Moses* to have been an *Egyptian* one, the same with the *Kneph* and *Isis* of that people; the *Jupiter* of the Greeks,

the *Vesta* of Pythagoras, and the *principle of fire* of the Stoics.*

2. Make it appear more evidently than you have done, that the seven lamps in the candlestick described by *Moses*, the twelve precious stones in the ephod of the *Hebrew* high-priest, or the lamb in the passover, had any relation to the worship of the stars; that the *Ark* was an imitation of the tomb of *Osiris*, and that the very name of this *Egyptian* prince, or deity, is preserved in the writings of *Moses*.† Having brought these strange things to our ears, we wish to have them reconciled to our understandings.

3. You are desired to give your reasons for supposing that the *Israelites* were driven out of *Egypt* in a time of famine, and that with no more than six thousand men they took possession of *Palestine*, occupied as it then was by several warlike nations, and to shew that the history of *Diodorus Siculus* is more to be depended on than that of *Moses*.‡

4. It behoves you still more to answer the following queries, with respect to which you have no *Diodorus Siculus* to lean upon, since you there stand wholly upon your own ground. Inform us what were the doctrines which the Jews, after their return from Babylon, borrowed from the *Chaldeans* or *Persians*; how the former prophets, from seeing the great conquests of the *Assyrians*, foresaw that their nation would be conquered by the *Babylonians*; that this Babylonian empire, then not existing, would be destroyed; how the *Messiah*, the great deliverer of the Jewish nation, came to be metamorphosed into a crucified malefactor, and that all the magnificent promises of the prophets were believed to have been accomplished in him; and how so distinct a history as we have of him, and of the propagation of his religion by twelve apostles, came to gain credit, and to be professed, at the hazard of men's properties and lives, immediately after the time in which he is said to have lived, if, as you suppose, the whole of the history was a mere fable. Perhaps you will say that the twelve apostles were the twelve signs of the *Zodiac*.

5. As you have not yet spoken *Tacitus*, *Suetonius*, or *Pliny* the younger, into nonexistence, (though, since your argument absolutely requires it, it may be expected that you will do it,) you are required to shew how they, who were all Heathens, came to give any account of this Jesus, of his having numerous disciples, and of their being grievously

* See *supra*, p. 81, Note.

† See *ibid*.

‡ See *ibid*, p. 82, Note *.

persecuted; that they were so numerous in the province of *Bythinia*, which was pretty near to the scene of the transactions, that the Heathen sacrifices were almost discontinued within a few years after the death of the last of the apostles.* You seem fond of paradoxes, and as you have amused the world with the proposal, you may like to do the same in a higher degree by the solution of them. To leave us in the dark after the promise of so much light will be very unkind.

6. As I do not suppose you will permit us to call in question your skill in the learned languages, you will oblige your numerous readers by shewing us how the word *Christ* is derived from the Hebrew *Heres*, and not from the Greek *χρισω*, as I believe we have all been taught at school, and are informed in all the common lexicons; and that this God, as you call him, of the *Christians*, is the same with the *Chrisen*, or *Christna*, of the *Hindoos*.

You will also please to add to this article some farther account of the derivation of the word *Jesus*, from *Yes*, which you say signifies 608, one of the solar periods, also of its being the ancient and *Cabalistic* name of the younger *Bacchus*, the clandestine or nocturnal son of *Minerva*,† and not the mere Greek pronunciation of the Hebrew *Joshua*, as *Elias* is of *Elijah*, which the slightest inspection of the *Septuagint* seems to prove; since we are less acquainted with this very deep erudition than you are.

7. As your knowledge of history is no more to be questioned than your acquaintance with the learned languages, it may be hoped that you will condescend to point out to us some records, with which we are at present unacquainted, concerning the history of *priests*. You say of them, among other things, no doubt equally well-founded, that they every where “live in celibacy, to get rid of domestic embarrassments;”‡ whereas in the histories to which we have had access, we do not find that any priests have been obliged to live in celibacy, except those of the Church of *Rome*. This was not the case with the *Heathen* priests. *Julius Cæsar* was a priest, and *Cicero* an augur, but they did not on that account live bachelors. The priests of *Cybele* were castrated, but this was rather a physical than a moral restraint from marriage; and the *Roman Vestals* were at liberty to marry after a certain period. Neither the *Mahometan* nor the *Hindoo* priests are restrained from marrying. The *Protestant* clergy in all countries are married. If you will make the

* See Vol. IV. p. 524; Vol. VIII. p. 106, *Note*.

† See *supra*, p. 86, *Note* *.

‡ See *ibid.* p. 88, *Note* †.

inquiry, you will find they are so in this very city. I, whom you call a priest, have been married. I have children, and grandchildren. But all these, you may say, are only exceptions to some general rule with which we are not acquainted.

8. You will confer greater obligations still on many priests, and make the profession much more eligible than it is at present, if you will shew that, "every where," as you also say, "under the cloak of poverty, they find the secret of being rich, and of procuring all sorts of enjoyments, and that they even receive greater revenues than those of princes."* This we have been led to think was the case of very few, and by no means that of the many. But by being taught to read history with your eyes, it may appear to have been the case of the many, and not of the few only.

9. As you have not taken any notice of the remarks of my learned friend, mentioned in my second *Appendix*,† I shall, in two queries, remind you of them. You say you have "the unanimous testimony of all ancient monuments" for a certain opinion concerning the religion of the ancient Egyptians, and yet you refer only to the opinion of *Cheremon*, who lived after the Christian era, and *some others*, whose names are unknown to us.‡ Please, therefore, to produce the other ancient monuments of the same thing. These we do not consider as ancient.

10. You say, that "the present system may be referred with certainty, on the authority of astronomy itself," (than which we allow that nothing can be more certain,) "to near seventeen thousand years,"§ which entirely overturns the *Mosaic* account of the origin of the human race. And you say that *M. Dupuis* has collected many probable reasons for thinking that formerly the constellation *libra* was at the vernal equinox.|| As we are not acquainted with *M. Dupuis's* reasons, but find that they have made a great impression on your mind, we doubt not but you can recollect them, and we hope you will have the goodness to communicate them to us. In such a want of real evidence, a probability, or the shadow of a probability, is not to be neglected; as in war,

* See *supra*, p. 88, Note †.

† See *infra* in *Appendix*, No. II.

‡ See *Ruines*, pp. 217, 345.

§ "Si l'on nous demande à quelle époque naquit ce système, nous répondrons, sur l'autorité des monumens de l'astronomie elle-même, que ces principes paroissent remonter avec certitude à près de 17,000 ans." *Ruines*, p. 221.

|| "M. Dupuis (*Astr. Anc.* p. 172) a rassemblé beaucoup de motifs très-plausibles de croire que jadis la *balance* étoit à l'équinoxe du printemps, et le *belier* à celui d'automne." *Ibid.* p. 340.

when better troops are not to be had, invalids are called out.

The *heliacal* rising of the stars is a remarkable *phenomenon*, noticed by *Hesiod*, and other ancient writers ; but, according to them, the age of the world cannot be greater than *Moses* represents it to have been. This is the opinion of Sir Isaac Newton.* But what was he, compared to M. *Dupuis* ? We therefore humbly hope that you will give us the information that escaped his researches.

11. Lastly, supposing, Sir, that you were in the place of your primitive man, dropped, as you say, by some accident, by the unknown power that produced him, in a garden, or orchard, furnished by the same power and the same accident, with fruit trees of all kinds, apples, peaches, plums, &c., with esculent plants and roots, as cabbages, carrots and potatoes, all excellent in their kinds, how, without any instruction concerning the use of your limbs, or your senses, you were able to avail yourself of them, and contrive to subsist ? Tell us how these apples, cabbages and potatoes, though they should have been ready boiled or roasted, could be conveyed to your mouth, while you lay sprawling and kicking the ground ? This is a difficulty I took the liberty to mention before, but you have not yet vouchsafed to solve it ; but we hope you will, on second thoughts, condescend to relieve us.†

Please, also, not to forget to inform us how the little, or the big, *Volney* got upon his feet ; how he learned to distinguish objects, to judge of their tangible properties by their visible ones, to distinguish wholesome from unwholesome fruits, and especially how he was able to quiet the unseasonable cravings of hunger, for at least a year or two, (since we cannot suppose that less time was necessary for the purpose,) till he had acquired that knowledge. Please, also, to inform us how a man, destitute of all innate ideas or experience, contrived to make love to a female of the same species, dropped by a similar accident in the same garden or orchard, in order to the perpetuation of the species. You, Sir, can, we doubt not, explain all this, though we cannot.‡

* See *Chronology*, pp. 80, 81.

† See *supra*, pp. 97, 98, 120.

‡ In England when a child is born into a family in which there are bigger children, capable of asking questions, it is very common for them to ask the nurse, "where the baby came from," and it is as common for her to say, that "papa found it in the parsley-bed." Now, as I never heard of M. Volney's father, I may, arguing just as he does with respect to the universe, say that he never had a father, but was found in a parsley-bed. The English nurse, however, does not go so far

Deign, Sir, we therefore beseech you, to answer these queries. Give us more light, or we must relapse into our pristine darkness; into the belief of a God, a providence, and a supernatural guide, as our mothers and nurses have taught us; and then, what advantage shall we derive from the new philosophy, and your ingenious *Meditations on the Ruins of Palmyra*?*

This, Sir, is from one part of the *double battery*, which you and Mr. Gibbon have given me. Should a *Trinitarian* antagonist appear I may turn to the other. At present my attention is not drawn that way, and I shall be glad if I can fire with as good effect towards your quarters as I have done in the opposite direction. If I should point a few more of my guns towards your falling *Ruins*, very little of them, I apprehend, would stand much longer; indeed, they seem to be in great danger of falling by their own weakness.

Differing as we do in so many things, I am happy that we are united as citizens of *France*, you by birth, and I by adoption.† Agreeably to this, I conclude with wishing you *health and fraternity*.

J. PRIESTLEY.

Philadelphia, March 22, 1797.

as M. Volney: for she allows the necessity of carefully nursing the new-found child; but our little Volney, immediately on his being dropped on the parsley-bed, was capable of running about, and of taking care of himself. (P.)

* "J'arrivai à la ville de *Hems*, sur les bords de l'*Orontes*: et là, me trouvant rapproché de celle de *Palmyre*, située dans le désert, je résolus de connoître par moi-même ses monumens si vantés; et, après trois jours de marche dans des solitudes arides, ayant traversé une vallée remplie de grottes et de *sépulchres*, tout à coup, au sortir de cette vallée, j'aperçus dans la plaine la scène de ruines la plus étouffante: c'étoit une multitude innombrable de superbes colonnes debout, qui, telles que les avenues de nos parcs, s'étendoient, à perte de vue, en files symétriques. Parmi ces colonnes étoient de grands édifices, les uns entiers, les autres à demi-roulés. De toutes parts la terre étoit jonchée de semblables débris, de corniches, de chapiteaux, de fûts, d'entablemens, de pilastres, tous de marbre blanc, d'un travail exquis. Après trois quarts d'heure de marche le long de ces ruines, j'entrai dans l'enceinte d'un vaste édifice, qui fut jadis un temple dédié au *soliel*: et je pris l'hospitalité chez de pauvres paysans Arabes, qui ont établi leurs chaumières sur le parvis même du temple; et je résolus de demeurer pendant quelques jours pour considérer en détail la beauté de tant d'ouvrages.

"Chaque jour je sortois pour visiter quelqu'un des monumens qui couvrent la plaine; et un soir que, l'esprit occupé de réflexions, je m'étois avancé jusqu'à la *vallée des sépulchres*, je montai sur les hauteurs qui la bordent, et d'où l'œil domine à la fois l'ensemble des ruines et l'immensité du désert. Le soleil venoit de se coucher.—L'ombre croissoit, et déjà dans le crépuscule mes regards ne distinguoient plus que les fantômes blanchâtres des colonnes et des murs.

"Ces lieux solitaires, cette soirée paisible, cette scène majestueuse, imprimèrent à mon esprit un recueillement religieux. L'aspect d'une grande cité déserte, la mémoire des temps passés, la comparaison de l'état présent, tout éleva mon cœur à de hautes pensées. Je m'assis sur le tronc d'une colonne; et là, le coude appuyé sur le genou, la tête soutenue sur la main, tantôt portant mes regards sur le désert, tantôt les fixant sur les ruines, je m'abandonnai à une rêverie profonde." *Ruines*, pp. 2—5.

† See Vol. XV. p. 525, Note.

A
COMPARISON
OF THE
INSTITUTIONS OF MOSES
WITH THOSE OF THE
Hindoos and other Ancient Nations;
WITH
REMARKS
ON M. DUPUIS'S ORIGIN OF ALL RELIGIONS,
AND ON THE
ALLEGORIZING TALENTS OF M. BOULANGER.

In trutinâ ponantur eâdem.

HORACE.

[*Northumberland, 1799.*]

TO HIS GRACE

THE

DUKE OF GRAFTON.*

MY LORD,

I TAKE the liberty to dedicate this work to your Grace, not so much as to one of the most respectable of the English nobility, or one whom I honour for his general maxims and conduct in the political world,† as for having, in my opinion, done yourself much greater honour by your attachment to the cause of Christianity, in an age in which many who occupy a distinguished rank in life pay little attention to it, in which many openly abandon the profession of it, and in which many of those who profess their belief of it appear (if we may judge of men's feelings and sentiments by their conduct) to have no just sense of its real value.

Not to be *ashamed of Christ* in such circumstances as these, is no small merit, though in those who derive emolument from the profession, or whose connexions in life lay them under no great temptation to infidelity, it is little or none. It is our suffering in the cause, in which the loss of general estimation is no inconsiderable article, that is the best proof of our sincerity, and of our title to be acknowledged by our Lord and Master as his *good and faithful servants*, when he shall come to receive the kingdom that is destined for him and his true disciples.

In that day, which I am willing to think is now at no great distance,‡ to have given any countenance to those who have laboured to promote the cause of Christian truth, and especially such as are exposed to some degree of odium on that account, will be considered as having bestowed favours on disciples *in the name of disciples*, and will not be without its reward.

That your Grace's very important services to the cause of Christian literature,§ and Christian truth, may have all the success to which they are entitled, is the sincere wish and prayer of,

My Lord,

Your Grace's most obedient humble Servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, Nov. 1, 1799.

* Who died in 1811, aged 75. See *Mon. Repos.* VI. pp. 245—251, 556, 651, 721; VII. p. 569; *Mem. of Lindsey*, pp. 320—336.

† See *Mon. Repos.* VI. pp. 249, 250.

‡ See Vol. XVI. pp. 395, 418, 433.

§ Especially instanced in the liberal patronage of *Griesbach*. See his *Preface*. *Introd. to Improved Version of the N. T.* p. xxiii.; *Mon. Repos.* VI. p. 249

PREFACE.

It has long appeared to me that a fair comparison of the ancient Heathen religions with the system of Revelation would contribute in an eminent degree to establish the evidences of the latter. Its superiority in sentiment and practice to any thing that the most enlightened of mankind have ever devised is so great, that it cannot be rationally accounted for, but by supposing it to have had a truly divine origin.

On this account I gave a general view of the ancient Heathen religions, and of their philosophy as far as it was connected with religion, in the first volume of my *Discourses* delivered at *Philadelphia*,* and a more detailed account of *Mahometanism*, and the circumstances attending its propagation, in the second volume.† I then promised to draw out a Comparison of the Institutions of the *Hindoos*, and those of other ancient nations, that have been most admired for their early civilization and science, with those of *Moses*, with which they were contemporary.‡ This promise I have endeavoured to discharge in the present performance, in which I have made the best use that I could of the ample materials with which we are now provided for the purpose.§

With these I have been chiefly furnished by the friendship of Dr. Andrew Ross, lately of *Philadelphia*, but now returned to his native country, *Scotland*. He shewed much zeal in promoting my undertaking; and I think it a circumstance of some weight even in the argument, that a person who has seen so much of the world as he has done, and who is so well acquainted with the principles and effects of religion in all parts of the *East*, is sincerely attached to Christianity. Miserably as this religion is corrupted in the *Turkish* dominions, he does not hesitate to declare that the *Christians* are a better people than the *Mahometans*, or the *Hindoos*, much as many unbelievers affect at least to boast of them, with a view to disparage Christianity.

I have not, however, in this work, confined myself to the religion of the *Hindoos*, but have given the best account

* In 1796 and 1797. See Vol. XVI. pp. 35—62, 90—116.

† See *ibid.* pp. 312—375.

‡ See *ibid.* pp. 197, 198.

§ See Dr. Priestley's earlier consideration of this subject, *Appendix*, No. IV.; Vol. III. pp 391—396; Vol. IV. pp. 502, 503.

that I have been able to collect of the general outline of the religion of the *Egyptians*, and that of other ancient nations of which we have any certain knowledge. And as general principles and customs continue long unchanged, especially in the *East*, there cannot be any doubt but that we are sufficiently well acquainted with every thing of much consequence with respect to the state of religion in the time of *Moses*, and from the very commencement of *Polytheism* and *idolatry*. And to every thing relating to this subject it behoves all the friends of revelation to give the closest attention. Judging of others by myself, I can assure them that the comparison will perpetually suggest to them the most lively sentiments of gratitude to the sovereign Disposer of all things, that they were born in a Christian country, and never had their minds bewildered and debased by the miserable superstition of any system of Heathenism or of *Mahometanism*. The religion of the most enlightened of the Heathens was always most absurd and despicable, while that of revelation was, from the beginning, truly rational and respectable, and as favourable to every virtue as the other was to various kinds of vice.

Having compared the institutions of *Moses* with those of the *Hindoos*, and of other ancient nations, it seemed not improper to add some remarks on the late elaborate work of M. *Dupuis*, on *the Origin of all Religions*. That I have combated his principles with success, is no great cause of boasting; it had, indeed, been done before by Mr. Estlin, of *Bristol*, in *England*,* in his “Discourse on the Nature and Causes of Atheism,”† which, together with another excellent and well-written tract of his, “On the Evidences of Revealed Religion,”‡ (in which he takes particular notice of Mr. Paine’s “Age of Reason,”) I take this opportunity of recommending to my readers. I will add, that I am not a little proud of having had such a pupil,§ so judicious an advocate for Christian truth, in an age in which the fascination of worldly pursuits has withdrawn so many from it.

An Address to the Jews seemed not improper to be subjoined to a defence of their religion; || and the present most

* Dr. Estlin died in 1817, aged 70. See Vol. II. p. viii.; *Mon. Repos.* XII. pp. 573—575.

† “To which are added, Remarks on a Work called *Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle*.” 1797. See *supra*, p. 87, *Note*.

‡ “And particularly Christianity, stated with reference to a pamphlet called the *Age of Reason*.” 1796.

§ At Warrington, in 1765. See *Mon. Repos.* IX. p. 266.

|| This *Address* is now reserved, to appear in a subsequent volume, with other pieces of a similar description. See Vol. XV. p. 325, *Note*.

extraordinary state of things in the political world led me to think there might be a still greater propriety in this, considering the great interest that, according to the prophecies of Scripture, they have in it. If my mind be thought to have been too strongly impressed by present appearances, and that I look sooner than we are authorized to do, for the fulfilment of the prophecies which have been the subject of so much discussion by Jews and Christians, and my apprehensions appear to be ill-founded, I shall only share the fate of many learned and worthy men who have gone before me. In this publication, little will be found more than I advanced in my *Fast Sermon for the Year 1794*,* which has been reprinted in this country, though, in the progress of the war in Europe, some events have taken place exceedingly favourable to the apprehensions I then expressed.

As I wished to quote all my authorities with as much exactness as possible, I have seldom departed from each writer's mode of spelling *Hindoo* words; and in this respect they differ exceedingly from each other. But in order to remedy this inconvenience, I shall give a list of *synonyms*, with the different names of the same *Hindoo* deities.† Also, as I often abridge the titles of some of the books that I quote, I shall give them more at length,‡ that the less learned reader may be under no mistake with respect to them.

It was my intention at one time, instead of the mere titles of the *methodical arrangement of the laws and institutions of Moses*,§ with references to the places in which they may be found, to have printed the whole at full length, and with notes. But as this would have made another volume, about as large as the present, I was deterred by the consideration of the expense of printing it. The *Notes* that I had prepared will be found among those which I have drawn up *on all the books of Scripture*,|| which is a work of considerable extent, and will be at the service of my friends and the public whenever it shall be called for.

* See Vol. XV. pp. 532—552.

† HINDOO, Gentoo; VEDA, Ved, Beda, Bhade; VEDAN, Bedang; SHASTAH, Shaster, Sastra; CALIOUGAM, Cal Jug; MAHABAD, Mehu, Mouni, Adam, Noah, SATYAVARMAN, Satiavarto, Sattivattna, Noah; BRAHMA, Birma, Burmha, Brumma; VICHNOU, Bistnoo, Kistna, Kissen, Crishnou, Christen, Narayen, Jaggernat, Rhaani; SIVA, Seib, Chib, Chiven, Tehiven, Mahadeva, Moideb, Mahadeo, Moisor, Isuren, Routren, Ruddery. (P.)

‡ This List is now reserved to form a part of a general Catalogue of the Authors and Works mentioned in this edition. See Vol. III. p. 217, *Note*.

§ This has been prefixed to the Notes on the Pentateuch, Vol. XI. pp. 33—40.

|| These *Notes* are now contained in Vols. XI.—XIV.

This is also the situation of my *Church History*, which I have brought down to the present times, and which will make about five such volumes as the two that are already printed.* Having no other works of much consequence in view, and being now too far advanced in life to undertake any thing very new, I shall keep giving my time to the improvement of these two; and whenever I meet with sufficient encouragement, they shall be printed. I do not mean profit, (for I shall cheerfully give my time and labour to what I think to be calculated to serve the cause of truth and virtue,) but such assistance as will enable me to print the works without more expense to myself than I can conveniently afford.

I have encouragement enough to send my works to be printed in *England*. But besides the risk of sending *manuscripts* to such a distance, at such a time as this, I could not be satisfied without the power of correcting the press myself. I must, therefore, wait for a more promising state of things, here or in *Europe*; believing, in the mean time, that whatever shall appear to be the order of Providence, though it should be the total suppression of all my labours, as it was of many of them at the Riots in *Birmingham*, [1791,] it will not be a subject of just complaint. Ourselves, and all our labours, are at the disposal of the great Being who made us, and who has endued us with whatever powers we are possessed of. A diligent and well-intended application of them is all that we can command, and therefore all that will be required of us.

As, before the Riots in *Birmingham*, I was engaged with some friends† in a *new translation of the Scriptures*, and had nearly finished the part that I had undertaken, which was the *Hagiographa*, and which was destroyed at that time, I shall here publish the *Plan* which I drew of that undertaking.‡ If there be any merit in it, it may be resumed by others in more favourable circumstances.

Since thus much of this *Preface* was written I have met with a work of Mr. Robison's,§ entitled "Proofs of a Conspiracy against all the Religions and Governments of

* For the whole of the *Church History*, see Vols. VIII.—X.

† Principally Mr. Lindsey, Mr. Dodson, and Mr. Frend. The latter has very kindly communicated to me two letters written to him by Dr. Priestley, in 1790, on the subject of their *translation*. These will appear in the *Correspondence*.

‡ For this *Plan*, and a *Proposal* published in 1784, see *Appendix*, Nos. V. VI.

§ "Professor of Natural Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh," 1797. See Dr. Priestley's "Letters to the Inhabitants of Northumberland," 1799, *Let. V.*; *New Ann. Reg.* (1797), XVIII. p. [261].

Europe, carried on in the secret Meetings of Free Masons, Illuminati, and Reading Societies." In this work I am charged with "preaching the detestable doctrines of Illuminatism," which he describes as "subversive of all religion, all morality, and all regular government."* He says that "I have given the most promising specimens of my docility in the principles of illuminatism, and have already passed through several degrees of initiation."† From my doctrine of Materialism, he says, "there is but a step to the Atheism of Diderot and Condorcet:"‡ and that "I have been preparing the minds of my readers for Atheism by my theory of the mind, and my commentary on the unmeaning jargon of Dr. Hartley."§

I rejoice in having my name connected with that of so great and excellent a man, a friend of Christianity, piety, and virtue, if ever there was one; and who has written infinitely more to the purpose in their defence, than Mr. Robison. Admitting the doctrine of *vibrations*, (on which he might have seen that neither Dr. Hartley nor myself lay any stress,) or any other *hypothesis* concerning the nature of intelligence, to be ill-founded, do we deny that man is possessed of intelligence? Do we deny that there is a Supreme Intelligence, that there is a righteous moral government of the world, and that men will be rewarded for their virtues and punished for their vices, in a future state? To advance solid arguments in proof of those great doctrines, the foundation of all religion and morality, which is the object of Dr. Hartley's work, and of many of mine, is, surely, a better evidence of our sincerity than mere declamation, or than the detection of societies hostile to religion and government; though I readily allow Mr. Robison to have much merit on this account.

He has given me much information on a subject of which I am wholly ignorant, having never been a free-mason, a member of any secret society, or of any political society whatever. I have no secrets. I write for the public at large, and my writings are open to examination, and of course to misrepresentation, and to such abuse as Mr. Robison and many others have poured upon them. But the time is coming that will *try every man's work*, and every man's thoughts. With respect to myself, that time cannot be very distant; and I hope I may say, without subjecting myself to any harsh censure, that, after a life of much

* *Proofs*, p. 354. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 355. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 358. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 355. (P.) See Vol. III. pp. 167—196

activity, and many trials, I do not wish myself any farther from that time than I am.

Because, writing soon after the French Revolution, and while the French king was living, I augured well of it,* Mr. Robison plainly enough insinuates that I am an enemy to all good government, and wish to introduce universal anarchy and licentiousness. But is this candid or fair?† Notwithstanding, however, all the evil that has taken place, (which has chiefly been owing to a most impolitic, and, I will add, wicked and unprincipled coalition of other powers to dictate to, and oppress that country,)‡ I still trust that the consequence of that revolution will be great and happy, and that the final issue of the present disturbed state of the world will be that glorious and most desirable state of things which is the subject of so many prophecies, though, according to the same prophecies, the state of things preceding this will be most calamitous. Present appearances greatly favour this expectation. The eye of sense sees the calamity, and the eye of faith sees with equal clearness the good that is to follow it.

* See Vol. XV. pp. 403, 435, 440, 444.

† "Professor Robison's treatise affords abundant evidence of the author's extreme political terror, excited by a very imperfect and contracted view of the causes of the French Revolution; of his credulity in admitting the crude and inconsistent allegations of German and French writers, and the most suspicious authorities, if they seem in the least to favour the hypothesis which his imagination has formed; and of a want of candour and liberality, in the insinuations and calumnies thrown out by him on those who differ from his own theological and political standard, which is deserving of the severest censure. But in vain will the unprejudiced reader examine it for *proofs of a conspiracy against all the religions and governments of Europe*. Were he indeed disposed to turn the tables on the author, and to adopt his latitude of suspicion and construction, he might accuse him of being leagued in a conspiracy against the liberties of mankind, and in support of corruption and political profigacy." *New Ann. Reg.* (1797), XVIII. p. [261].

‡ The *Precursors*, whom *Great Britain* condescended to follow, in this *royal* interference, were "The Emperor of Germany and King of Prussia." See their *Manifesto* in *New Ann. Reg.* (1792), XIII. pp. (116)—(133). The general hired to execute the vengeance of their Majesties "was the *Duke of Brunswick*, brother-in-law of *George III.*" See the *Duke's Declaration*, "given at *Coblentz*, July 25, 1792," *ibid.* pp. (133)—(136). It contains the following denunciation:

"The city of *Paris* and all its inhabitants, without distinction, shall be called upon to *submit instantly and without delay to the king*, to set that prince at full liberty, and to ensure to his and to all royal persons that inviolability and respect which are due, by the laws of nature and of nations, to sovereigns; their imperial and royal majesties, making personally responsible for all events, on pain of losing their heads, pursuant to military trials, without hopes of pardon, all the members of the National Assembly, of the department, of the district, of the municipality, and of the national guards of *Paris*, justices of the peace, and others whom it may concern: and their imperial and royal majesties farther declare, on their faith and word of emperor and king, that if the palace of the *Thuilleries* be forced or insulted, if the least violence be offered, the least outrage done to their majesties, the king, queen, and the royal family, if they be not immediately placed in safety and set at liberty, they will inflict on those who shall deserve it, the most exemplary and ever-memorable avenging punishments, by giving up the city of *Paris* to military execution, and exposing it to total destruction." *Ibid.* p. (135).

THE
INSTITUTIONS OF MOSES
AND THOSE OF THE
HINDOOS, &c. COMPARED.

THE
INTRODUCTION.

THE institutions of the *Hindoos*, civil and religious, are the most respectable for their antiquity of any that now subsist, at least, of any that are extant in writing. The fundamental principles of them were probably prior to those of *Moses*, the whole of the system in its present state could not have been much later than his time, and we are now happily in possession of the most authentic documents concerning it. We only want a translation into some European language of the *Vedas*,* which contain all their laws, as they are said to have come from the mouth of *Brahma*, by the immediate direction of the Supreme Being. The original, we are informed, is now in the possession of an *Englishman*,† and, therefore, it is to be hoped, we shall not be long without an *English* version of books of so much curiosity. In the mean time we have other works composed by *Hindoos*, which contain a faithful account of every thing of importance in them; and, therefore, as we cannot be in any doubt with respect to their genuine principles, it is in our power to examine them without any danger of falling into the least mistake of consequence; though more express and direct authorities may hereafter be produced from the *Vedas* themselves.

The *Hindoos* and their institutions are held in the highest

* See the account of an *English* abridgment of the *Vedant*, Vol. IV. p. 502, Note; *Mon. Repos.* XV. p. 6.

† "Colonel Polier obtained from *Jeyepür* a transcript of what purported to be a complete copy of the *Vedas*, and which he deposited in the British Museum." *Asiatic Researches*, VIII. p. 369.

admiration by many Europeans who have cultivated an acquaintance with them. "From the earliest times," says Mr. Holwell, they "have been an ornament to the creation."* *M. Langles*, the French translator of the *Heetopades*, a curious book of Indian Fables,† calls the authors of the *Hindoo* religion, "venerable institutors, who delivered precepts of the soundest morality, and a system of metaphysics truly sublime, hid under an ingenious veil of allegory.‡ Their religion," he says, "reputable in its errors, boasts, like every other, a celestial origin."§

Every thing of great antiquity relating to any part of the human species must be interesting, not only to their posterity, but to all mankind; as the institutions of their remote ancestors must be capable of receiving some illustration from the knowledge of them: for some relation or other, by connexion or opposition, must have subsisted between them. "In the religion of the *Hindoos*," says *M. Langles*, "notwithstanding all the alterations it has undergone, we distinguish in its morals, in its doctrines, and in its ceremonies, those of the Egyptians and Jews; who have done nothing but ape (*singer*) the latter, of the Chinese, of the Greeks, of the Romans, and even of the Christians."

This writer farther says, "The five *Vedas*, of which four only now remain, seem to be the prototype of the five *kings* of the Chinese, and the five books of Moses, who have only copied Egyptian works, originally from India."|| "Then, speaking of the *Egyptians* and *Jews*, he says, "They have altered them, and mixed them with fables, to adapt them to the genius and taste of their countrymen; but they have not been able to efface marks of resemblance, which would be more striking if we had a more complete translation of the Indian original, and of the Chinese imitation. I have, however, collected circumstances of comparison sufficient to convince the most incredulous, if they be honest. This I reserve for a particular dissertation on the conformity of the Chinese, the Egyptians, and Jews, with the Indians."¶

* "Interesting Historical Events relative to the Provinces of Bengal and the Empire of Indostan. Also the Mythology, &c. of the Gentoos, followers of the Shastah." Pt. i. Ed. 2, 1766 (*Prelim. Disc.*), p. 6. See Vol. III. p. 392, *Note*.

† Of which there was published, in 1787, an English version, entitled, "The Heetopades of Veeshnoo-Sarma, in a Series of connected Fables, interspersed with Moral, Prudential, and Political Maxims, translated from an Ancient Manuscript in the Sanskreet Language, with Explanatory Notes, by Charles Wilkins." See *New Ann. Reg.*, VIII. (1787), pp. [266, 267].

‡ *Discours Préliminaire*, p. 7. (P.) After every inquiry in my power I am unable to procure this *French translation*.

§ *Ibid.* p. 10. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 22. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* p. 24. (P.)

“I consider,” he says, “the Pentateuch as an abridgment of the Egyptian books, the original of which still exists in India, where literature was cultivated long before Egypt was made habitable by the labour of men.* Moses,” he says, “educated at the court of Pharaoh, endowed with talents and knowledge which never entered into the head of a Jew, made use of it to form a body of laws for a small horde of slaves, whose escape he favoured.”†

This having been advanced, it behoves both *Jews* and *Christians* to consider what relation their institutions bear to those from which they are said to have been derived. Our author, we see, has promised to do this for us in another work; but as I have not heard of its being executed, and it is uncertain whether his design will ever be carried into execution, it is worth our while, in a business of so much importance, to examine the probable ground of his opinion. And from the attention that I have given to the subject, I am under no apprehension of the institutions of *Moses* losing any part of the respect that has hitherto been paid to them, in consequence of a fair comparison with those of the *Hindoos*, or those of any other ancient nation.

On the contrary, I am persuaded that the wisdom of the laws and of the religion prescribed in the writings of *Moses*, and in the books of the *Old Testament* in general, which are written in the same spirit, will appear to so much advantage, when contrasted with those of the *Hindoos*, that, considering the little opportunity that Moses, or any person of his nation, could have had for acquiring superior knowledge, the origin of his institutions cannot but be concluded to have been divine. That *the five books of Moses* could have been composed from *the five Vedas*, if ever there were five, (for *three* only are mentioned in the oldest *Hindoo* writings, and a fourth was added afterwards,)‡ could hardly, I should have thought, have been asserted by any person who had read the *Pentateuch*, and such accounts as we have had of the *Vedas*.

The *Institutes of Menu* are next in authority to the *Vedas* themselves, and they contain a faithful account of every thing that is of much importance in them; and of this work Sir William Jones, who translated it, says, “It is a system of despotism and priestcraft, both indeed limited by law, but artfully conspiring to give mutual support, though with mutual checks. It is filled with strange conceits in metaphysics and natural philosophy, with idle superstitions, and

* *Discours Prélim.* p. 15. (P.) † *Ibid.* p. 14. (P.) ‡ See Sect. iii. *infra*.

with a scheme of theology most obscurely figurative, and consequently liable to dangerous misconception. It abounds with minute and childish formalities, with ceremonies generally absurd and often ridiculous. The punishments are partial and fanciful; for some crimes, dreadfully cruel, and for others, reprehensively slight; and the very morals, though rigid enough on the whole, are, in one or two instances, (as in the case of light oaths, and of pious perjury,) unaccountably relaxed. Nevertheless, a spirit of sublime devotion, of benevolence to mankind, and of amiable tenderness to all sentient creatures, pervades the whole work.*

These two men, M. *Langles* and Sir William Jones, both translators of *Hindoo* writings, must have had very different ideas of their institutions; and when men of learning, equally acquainted with the religion and language of these people, differ so widely in their opinion, on a subject of so much importance, it behoves every person who can do it, to judge for himself. Having attentively considered all that Europeans as yet know of the *Hindoos*, I must say that I entirely agree with Sir William Jones in the former part of the opinion given above, but not in the latter part of it. There are, no doubt, some sentiments of just, and what may be called *sublime* devotion in the Hindoo writings. For if devotional sentiments be just, they must, from the greatness of the object, partake of the sublime. But the general character of the devotion of the Hindoos is that of a debasing superstition; and their tenderness for animals is chiefly superstition and weakness, derived from their doctrine of transmigration. But though I give my opinion with this freedom, my readers will have it in their power to judge for themselves, from the copious extracts which I shall lay before them, from Hindoo books, and the testimony of travellers of the greatest credit, such as are allowed to have been the best informed concerning the religion, the customs, and the government of *Hindustan*.

SECTION I.

Of the Antiquity of the Hindoo Nation and Religion.

The *Hindoos*, like the *Egyptians*, and most other ancient nations, make a boast of the most extravagant antiquity; and some persons, evidently with a view to undervalue the

* “Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinances of Menu.” *Pref.* in Sir. W. Jones’s *Works*, 8vo. 1807, VII. p. 88.

Jews, give, or affect to give, them credit. M. *Langles* says, "many thousand years before these people" (among whom he includes the *Egyptians*, *Jews* and *Chinese*) "formed themselves into societies, or ever thought of forming a religion, the civilized Indians adored the Supreme Being, eternal, almighty and all-wise, divided into three persons."*

Happily, these extravagant accounts contain *data* by means of which we are able, from our knowledge of the course of nature, to reduce these enormous antiquities within the bounds of reason and probability. An excellent specimen of this has been given by Sir Isaac Newton, in his *Chronology of Ancient Kingdoms amended*.† By such lights as these, persons of sagacity and good judgment have made it appear with sufficient evidence, that the oldest accounts of the *Hindoo* nation do not in reality go any farther back than to the deluge mentioned in the books of Moses, and that their religious institutions were consequently posterior to that event. Some unbelievers in revelation have had the candour to avow this opinion. There is, however, no doubt of the very great antiquity of the *Hindoo* religion.

Sir William Jones says, "The first corruption of the purest and oldest religion," (which consisted in the worship of one God, the maker and governor of all things,) "was the system of *Indian* theology, invented by the *Bráhmans*, and prevalent in those territories where the book of *MAHA'BA'D* or *MENU*, is at this hour the standard of all religious and moral duties."‡ In his *preface* to the *Institutes of Menu*, he says, "The *Hindus* firmly believe" them "to have been promulged by *MENU*, the son or grandson of *BRÁHMA'*, or, in plain language, the first of created beings."§ This work, he says, is "one of the oldest compositions existing," written "about three hundred years" after the *Vedas*, or "about eight hundred and eighty years before *CHRIST*'s birth."||

According to another account, the *Vedas* were composed about "1580 years" before Christ,¶ or about one hundred years before the time of Moses. *MENU* himself, to whom these *Institutes* are ascribed, was, Sir William Jones is of opinion, the same with *ADAM*,** and that *MENU II.* was *Noah*.††

* *Disc. Prélim.* p. 12. (P.)

† See his *Introduction*.

‡ "Dissertations and Miscellaneous Pieces relating to the History and Antiquities, the Arts, Sciences and Literature of Asia." 1792, I. p. 199. (P.)

§ *Works*, VII. p. 76.

|| *Ibid.* pp. 77, 79.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 80. Sir W. Jones considers "the former date the more probable of the two." *Ibid.*

** *Ibid.* p. 83.

†† *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 324. (P.)

The opinion of M. *Freret** and M. *Bailly*,† no friends of revelation, are nearly the same with this of Sir William Jones. According to the former, the period called *Caliougam* is the commencement of real *Hindoo* history, every thing preceding it being merely fabulous; and then the year of Christ, 1778, will correspond to the Hindoo year 4880.‡ M. *Bailly* says, the Indian astronomy had its origin 3102 years before Christ.§ Nay, the most learned of the *Bramins* themselves say, that the *Vedas* are not older than 4866 years,|| which carries them to about 260 years after the deluge.

This is the date that Mr. *Holwell* assigns to the original *Chatah Bhade Shastah*,¶ as he calls the work. A thousand years after this, he says, some expounders of the work published a paraphrase of it, retaining the original entire. This was called *Chatah Bhade*.* * “From the promulging this *Bhade*,” he says, “the polytheism of the *Gentoos* took its rise.”†† “About five hundred years later—a second exposition or commentary on the *Chatah Bhade*” was published, “entitled, the *Aughtorrah Bhade Shastah*, or the *Eighteen Books of Divine Words*,” in which “the original text of the *Chatah Bhade* was in a manner sunk, and alluded to only.” At this time “a multitude of ceremonials, and exterior modes of worship, were instituted,—and the whole enveloped in impenetrable obscurity, by allegory and fable—the laity being thus precluded from the knowledge of their original Scriptures.”‡‡ “This innovation of the *Aughtorrah Bhade*,” he says, “produced a schism amongst the *Gentoos*,—for the *Bramins* of *Cormandell* and *Mallabar*,

* See *supra*, p. 10, Note *.

† *John Sylvain Bailly*, born at Paris in 1736. He was distinguished by his astronomical works and various publications on ancient history. This philosopher was chosen Mayor of Paris on the memorable July 14, 1789. He resigned his office in 1791, and suffered death under the tyranny of *Robespierre*, Nov. 12, 1793.

‡ “*L’Ezour-Védam*, ou Ancien Commentaire du Védam. Traduit du *Samscretan* par un Brame.” *Yverdon*, 1778, II. p. 216. (P.) See *infra*, Sect. iii. *ad fin*.

§ “Il résulte des calculs de M. le Gentil, dont peut garantir l’exactitude, que les Indiens sont actuellement, en 1778, dans la 4880 année de *caliougam* ou de l’âge d’infortune. Acad. des Sciences, 1772, 2^e Part, p. 198.” *L’Ezour-Védam*, II. p. 216.

¶ “Sketches relating to the History, Religion, Learning and Manners of the Hindoos,” by Q. Craufurd, Ed. 2, 1792, I. p. 307. (P.) “Il a son origine dans l’époque de 3102.” *Traité de l’Astron.* par M. *Bailly*, 1787, p. xxxvii.

|| *L’Ezour-Védam*, II. p. 217. (P.) “Ce Livre (le *Védam*) n’a que 4866 ans d’antiquité, suivant l’opinion des brames les plus zélés pour l’honneur de leur livre sacré.” *Ibid.* See *Holwell*, Pt. ii. Ch. iv. pp. 10, 11.

¶ “Of *Bramah*; literally, ‘the Four Scriptures of Divine Words of the Mighty Spirit.’” *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 12. See *ibid.* p. 22.

* * “The *Chatah Bhade* of *Bramah*, or the Six Scriptures of the Mighty Spirit.” *Ibid.* p. 13.

†† *Ibid.*

‡‡ *Ibid.* p. 14.

finding their brethren upon the course of the *Ganges*, had taken this bold step to enslave the laity,—formed a scripture of their own, founded, as they said, upon the *Chatah Bhade of Bramah*.*

Mr. Dow says, “the first credible account we have of the *Bedas* is, that about the commencement of the *Cal Jug*, of which æra the (present) year 1768 is the 4886th year, they were written, or rather collected, by a great philosopher and reputed prophet, called *Beüs Muni*, or *Beüs the inspired*. This learned man is otherwise called, *Krishen Basdeo*, and is said to have lived in the reign of *Judishter*,—near the present city of Dehli.”†

According to the learned *Pundits* who compiled the “Code of *Gentoo Laws*,” the *Shaster*, that is the *Vedas*, were not composed till crimes became common. They say, that “for some period after the creation of the world, there was neither magistrate nor punishment; and no man committed crimes:”‡ and as the *Hindoos* believe in the deluge, which they say destroyed all the human race, except eight persons, the composition of these books must necessarily have been a considerable time after that event: for their laws are contained in these books.

It is the opinion of Sir William Jones that the origin of the *Hindoo* nation and government is to be looked for in *Iran*, or *Persia*, where a great monarchy was established before the *Assyrian*, called by the Oriental historians the *Pishdadian* dynasty;§ and they say, “that the book of MAHA’BA’D, or MENU,” the first of these ancient monarchs, which was written in a celestial dialect, means the *Veda*.|| This “first monarch,” they also say, “divided the people into four orders, the *religious*, the *military*, the *commercial*, and the *servile*.¶ This, therefore, must have been a *Hindoo* government.

In the reign of *Hushang*, the third of the *Pishdadian* race, a reformation was made in the religious system. This, Sir W. Jones says, “was partial; for while they rejected the complex polytheism of their predecessors, they retained the laws of MAHA’BA’D, with a superstitious veneration for the

* *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. pp. 14, 15.

† *Hist. of Hindostan*, 1768, I. (*Dissert.*) pp. xxvii. xxviii. (P.)

‡ “A Code of *Gentoo Laws*, or Ordinations of the *Pundits*.” (Translated by Nathaniel Brassey Halhed.) “From a Persian Translation made from the Original in the Shanscrit Language.” 1777, p. ci. (P.)

§ *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 205. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* II. p. 110. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* I. p. 198. (P.)

sun, the planets and fire." Thus "the popular worship of the *Iranians*, under HUSHANG, was purely *Sabian*."* On this the favourers of the old religion retired to *Hindustan*, and "they are expressly forbidden by their oldest existing laws to leave the region which they inhabit at this day."†

Another reformation, or change, in the system was made, Sir W. Jones says, under *Gushtasp*, (in the next, or the *Kaianite* dynasty,) thought to have been the same with *Darius Hystaspes*. This was effected by *Zeratusht*, or *Zoroaster*; he introduced "genii, or angels, presiding over months and days,—new ceremonies in the veneration shewn to fire," and gave out "a new work, which he pretended to have received from heaven," but withal, he established "the actual adoration of one Supreme Being."‡ This work was lost at the conquest of Persia by the Mahometans; but the priests of that religion have composed another from what they were able to recollect of their institutions. It is called *Zend-Avesta*, and has been translated into French by M. *Anquetil Du Perron*.§

The followers of *Zeratusht*, now called *Gebres*, or *Parsis*, persecuted those of the religion immediately preceding, who "retired to India, where they compiled a number of books, now extremely scarce."|| They resemble, Sir William Jones says, the *Hindoo* sects of *Sauras* and *Saguinas*, of which the last-mentioned is very numerous at *Benares*.

Another innovator in the religion of the East, before the Christian æra, was BUDDHA, generally supposed to have been the same with the *Fo* of the Chinese, the *Sommono-Kodom* of Siam, the *Xaca* of Japan, and the *Odin* of the North of Europe. According to Sir William Jones, he disapproved of the *Vedas*, "because they enjoined sacrifices of cattle,"¶ and made his appearance in 1027 B. C.** His disciples are thought to have been the same with the *Sammanes*, who were opposed to the *Brachmanes* of the Greek historians. But the *Sammanes* were, I doubt not, of much greater antiquity, as also was *Sommono-Kodom*. The followers of

* *Dissert. on Asia*, I. pp. 198, 200. *Sabaism*, being a much more simple religion than that of the *Hindoos*, must, I doubt not, have preceded it. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 206. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 200. (P.)

§ M. Du Perron first communicated the result of his voyage to India, in quest of literary antiquities, in a paper read before the *Academy of Sciences* at Paris, in 1762, which was translated in the *Annual Register* of that year. In 1771 he published, in 3 Vols. 4to, "*Zend-Avesta, Ouvrage de Zoroastre, contenant les Idées Théologiques, Physiques et Morales de ce Législateur, et plusieurs Traits importants relatifs à l'Ancienne Histoire des Perses.*" See *New. Ann. Reg.* (1762), V. pp. 103—129; *Dissert. on Asia*, I. pp. 187, 190.

|| *Ibid.* p. 183. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* p. 23. (P.)

** *Ibid.* p. 321.

BUDDHA gave great umbrage to the *Bramins*,* who never ceased to persecute them till they had effected their extirpation from *Hindustan* by fire and sword, about five hundred years ago.†

There is, however, a great resemblance between the system of the *Hindoos* and that of BUDDHA; and perhaps with a view to conciliate these people, “the *Brâhmans* of *Câsi*” make “BUDDHA the ninth *Avatâr*” or transformation of VISHNU.‡ This religion is that which prevails in *India* beyond the *Ganges*. It was received in *China*, A. D. 65, and is established in *Japan*. A religion very similar to this is also that of the *Lamas* of *Tibet*.

Indeed, all the deviations from the original *Hindoo* system retained the same general principles. The advocates of them all held the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls, their subsisting and acting, independently of bodies, and their transmigration into other bodies after death. They had the same low opinion of *matter*, and the same veneration for the elements of *fire* and *water*, as purifiers of the soul. They had similar restrictions with respect to food, the same addictedness to divination, and the same idea of the use of corporeal austerities for the expiation of sin. I shall, therefore, in this work, consider what I find concerning any of them, as equally to my purpose, though I shall not fail to distinguish what belongs to each. They are all very ancient *oriental* religions, and it may not be amiss to compare the institutions of *Moses* with the most improved of them, as well as with those that were coeval with himself.

SECTION II.

Points of Resemblance between the Religions of the Hindoos and that of the Egyptians, Greeks, and other Western Nations.

It may be thought to be of some importance to compare the institutions of *Moses*, with those with which he may be supposed to have been acquainted, rather than with those which were merely of equal antiquity; but, in fact, those of the *Hindoos* are in this state, since the same general prin-

* *L' Ezour-Védam* (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. pp. 70—72, 105. (P.) “Eclairer les hommes et mépriser les superstitions sont des crimes impardonnables aux yeux des prêtres ignorans et fanatiques; tels étoient alors les brachmanes.” *Ibid.* pp. 70, 71.

† *Mod. Univ. Hist.* 1759, VII. p. 185. (P.)

‡ *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 23. (P.)

ciples may be found in them, and in those of the *Egyptians*, and other nations in the neighbourhood of *Palestine*. Indeed, it is probable from this and other circumstances, that the commencement of all these systems which deviated from the religion of the patriarchs (which is preserved in the writings of Moses) was prior to the general dispersion of mankind.

A system so ancient as that of the *Hindoos* must have been formed about the same time with that of the *Egyptians*, from which that of the *Greeks*, and other western nations, was in some measure derived; and accordingly, many points of resemblance have been observed between them, too many and too striking to have been fortuitous. Even some of the inhabitants of *Ethiopia* appear to have been of the same origin with those of *Hindustan*, and both the *Ethiopians* and *Egyptians* seem to have had some connexion or intercourse with the *Hindoos*;* but of what kind it was, or when it subsisted, we have no certain account; and they have been so long separated, that at present they are in total ignorance of each other.

According to *Eusebius* and *Syncellus*,† some people from the river *Indus* settled in the neighbourhood of *Egypt*, in the reign of *Amenophis*, the father of *Sesostris*, and many *Egyptians*, banished by their princes, settled in other countries, and some went so far as *India*.‡ It is also supposed that many of the priests of Egypt left the country on the invasion of it by *Cambyses*. But such circumstances as these are not sufficient to account for the great resemblance between the two systems. The *Hindoos* themselves say, that their sacred books came from the *West*.§ But themselves, no doubt, as

* *Dissert.* I. pp. 111, 112. (P.) "The remains of architecture and sculpture in *India*—seem to prove an early connexion between this country and *Africa*.—The letters on many of those monuments appear partly of *Indian* and partly of *Abyssinian* or *Ethiopic* origin; and all these indubitable facts may induce no ill-grounded opinion, that *Ethiopia* and *Hindustan* were peopled or colonized by the same extraordinary race; in confirmation of which it may be added, that the mountaineers of *Bengal* and *Bahar* can hardly be distinguished in some of their features, particularly their lips and noses, from the modern *Abyssinians*, whom the *Arabs* call the children of *Cush*: and the antient *Hindus*, according to *Strabo*, differed in nothing from the *Africans* but in the straightness and smoothness of their hair, while that of the others was crisp or woolly; a difference proceeding chiefly, if not entirely, from the respective humidity or dryness of their atmospheres." Sir W. Jones, *ibid*.

† "Æthiopes, ab Indo flumine consurgentes, juxta Ægyptum cousederunt. *Euseb.* ad Ann. CCCCH. *Syncell.* p. 151." *L'Ézour-Védum* (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. p. 15. *Note*.

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 15, 16. (P.) "Les unes se réfugièrent sur les côtes de Lybie, et d'autres s'embarquèrent sur la Mer Rouge, et pénétrèrent jusqu'aux Indes" *Ibid.* p. 17.

§ *Ibid.* (P.)

well as their books, came from that quarter, and their sacred books were probably composed while the seat of the empire was in *Persia*.

There are a few *Egyptian* words similar to those in the ancient language of *Hindustan*, which seem to shew that the two people had some affinity to each other. *Brama*, pronounced *birouma* in Malabar, signifies *man*, and so did *pirouma* in the language of *Egypt*.* The name of the river of Egypt, *Nile*, is probably *Sanscrit*, since *nila* in that language signifies *blue*; and the ancients say it had its name from that colour.†

But circumstances of much more importance than these, discover some early connexion between *Hindustan* and *Egypt*. The names and figures of the twelve signs of the Zodiac, among the *Hindoos*, are nearly the same with ours, which came from *Egypt* through Greece, and each of these signs is divided into thirty degrees.‡ Both the *Egyptians* and *Hindoos* had also the same division of time into *weeks*, and they denominated each of the days by the names of the same planets.§

The resemblance between the *Oriental* and *Occidental* systems extends much farther than *Egypt*. The office and power of the *Druids*, in the northern parts of Europe, did not differ much from those of the *Bramins*; and “the old *Hetruscans*, from whom great part of the *Roman* language and religion was derived,” had a system which “had a near affinity with that of the *Persians* and *Indians*,” and they “used to write their lines, alternately, forwards and backwards.”||

Several remarkable *general principles* were held alike by the ancient *Egyptians* and the modern *Hindoos*. They both believed that the souls of men existed in a prior state, and that they go into other bodies after death. They had the same ideas of the body being a prison to the soul, and ima-

* “*Histoire du Christianisme des Indes*; par M. V. La Croze,” 1758, (*A la Haye*), II. pp. 224, 225. (P.) “Je ne doute presque point que le nom de *Brama* soit un nom *Egyptien*, qui tire son origine du mot *Pirouma*, qui signifie homme en cette langue.—Les *Malabares*, au lieu de *Brama*, prononcent *Birouma*, ce qui approche plus du mot *Egyptien*.” *Ibid*.

† *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 58. (P.) “As far as etymology can help us, we may safely derive *Nilus* from the *Sanscrit* word *nila*, or *blue*; since *Dioscorus* expressly calls the waters of that river ‘an azure stream.’” Sir W. Jones, *ibid*.

‡ *Sketches*, I. pp. 312, 313. (P.)

§ *La Croze*, II. p. 308. (P.) “Ils (*les Indiens*) ont le même nombre de *planettes* que nous, et ils s’en servent de la même manière pour marquer les jours de la semaine: coutume, qu’ils ont reçue des *Egyptiens*, parmi les quels cette division septénaire étoit fort ancienne.” *Ibid*.

|| *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 348. (P.)

gined that they could purify and exalt the soul by the mortification of the body; and from the idea of the great superiority of spiritual to corporeal substances, they held all *matter* in great contempt. They also both believed that plants had a principle of animation.*

Several religious ideas and customs were common to both countries. The *Egyptians* of *Thebais* represented the world under the figure of an egg, which came from the mouth of *Cneph*,† and this we shall shew, resembled the first production according to the *Hindoo* system. Several of the Egyptian deities were both male and female, which corresponds to the figure of the *lingam* with the *Hindoos*.‡ This obscene figure, at least the *phallus*, was much used in the Egyptian worship, and from *Egypt* it was carried into *Greece*, where it was used in the mysteries of *Bacchus*.§ As the *Hindoos* worship their god *Isuren* under this figure, and likewise carry it in procession, the Egyptians and Greeks did the same with the *phallus*.|| Also the lascivious postures of the *Egyptian* women before their god *Apis*, were the same with those of the *Hindoo* women before their idols.¶ Lastly, the *Hindoos* choose their sacred bulls by the same marks that were used by the *Egyptians*.**

The account of the flight of the *Egyptian* gods, as given by the *Greeks*, and their concealing themselves under the forms of animals, bears some resemblance to the various transformations of *Vichnou*, of which an account will be given hereafter. The *Egyptians* worshipped the *Nile*, as the *Hindoos* do the *Ganges*. Some of the *Hindoo* temples have the same remarkable form, viz. that of a pyramid, or cone. For, that the pyramids of *Egypt* had some religious use can hardly be doubted. All the *pagodas* are in that form, or have towers of that form in the buildings which surround

* *La Croze*, II. p. 232. (P.) “Que les plantes sont sensibles et animées.” *Ibid.*

† *L' Ezour-Védam* (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. p. 18. (P.) According to “*Euseb. Præp. Evang.* L. iii. C. xi.” *Ibid.*

‡ *L' Ezour-Védam*. (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. pp. 23, 24. (P.) § See Vol. XVI. pp. 47, 54.

|| *La Croze*, II. p. 227. (P.) “Les Indiens ont le *lingam*, qui ajoute encore quelque chose à l'enfanie du *phallus* des *Egyptiens* et des *Grecs*. Ils adorent le faux dieu *Isuren* sous cette figure monstrueuse et obscène, qu'ils exposent dans les temples, et qu'ils portent en procession, insultant d'une manière horrible à la pudeur et à la crédulité de la populace.” *Ibid.*

¶ *L' Ezour-Védam* (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. p. 33. (P.)

** *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 196. (P.) “When I told MURÁRI,” (an officer of the *Mahráttas*,) says Colonel Pearse, “that the *Egyptians* worshipped a bull, and chose the God by a black mark on his tongue, and that they adored birds and trees, he immediately exclaimed, ‘Their religion then was the same with ours.’” *Ibid.*

them. The temples in *Pegu* are also of a conical form.* Mr. Burrow says, that “the pyramids of Egypt, as well as those lately discovered in *Ireland*, (and probably too the *Tower of BABEL*,) seem to have been intended for images of *MAHADEO*.”† Lastly, the onion, which was held in veneration by the Egyptians, is not eaten by the Hindoos.‡

Not only do we find the same general principles, and the same, or similar, religious customs, but some of the same gods among the *Hindoos*, *Egyptians*, and *Greeks*. The Egyptian *Cneph* was the Supreme Intelligence, which was never lost sight of by the Hindoos. With the Egyptians, *Isis* represented not only the moon, but sometimes “the powers of nature,” which were supposed to have been in a great measure derived from the moon; and in *Bengal* and *Japan* also the same is called *ISA’NI’*, or *ISI’*, and is described as a “goddess with many arms.”§ But according to Sir William Jones, “the *ISWARA* and *ISI’* of the *Hindus* are the *OSIRIS* and *ISIS* of the *Egyptians*,|| and *Nared*, a distinguished son of *Brahma*, resembles *Hermes*, or *Mercury*. A statue of *Jupiter* had been found so early as the taking of *Troy* (*Pausanias*) with a *third eye* in his forehead, and *SIVA* is believed to have *three eyes*.”¶ *Diodorus Siculus* and *Plutarch* say, that *Osiris* signifies a person that has *many eyes*, and *Isuren* is drawn with an additional eye in his forehead, though the *phallus* is his usual form. *Osiris* was said to have been killed by *Typhon*, and *Chib* cut off the head of *Brahma*.**

Indra of the Hindoos, called also *Divespiter*, is *Jupiter*, or *Diespiter*; “the bull of *ISWARA* seems to be *APIS*, or *AP*,†† of Egypt.” “*CA’RTICEYA*, with his six faces and numerous eyes, seems clearly to be the *ORUS* of *Egypt*, and the *MARS* of *Italy*.”‡‡ *SRI’*, or *SRI’S*, called also *PEDMA’*, and *CAMALA’*, was *CERES*.§§ and according to *Herodotus*, she was the Egyptian *Isis*.||| *Ganesa* was *Janus*.¶¶ The *Indian* “*VISWACARMAN*, the *forger of arms* for the Gods,” was *VULCAN*.*** The *RA’MA* of India is *DIONYSOS*, called

* *Mod. Univ. Hist.* VII. p. 58. (P.) † *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 266. (P.)

† *Sketches*, II. p. 232. (P.) § *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 232. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 49. (P.) ¶ *Ibid.* p. 42. (P.)

** *L’Ezour-Védam* (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. p. 23. (P.) “*Osiris fut mis à mort par Typhon, Chib coupa la tête à Bramma.*” *Ibid.*

†† *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 50. (P.) Sir W. Jones adds on *AP*, “As he is more correctly named in the true reading of a passage in *Jeremiah*,” *Ibid.* See on *Jer.* xlvii. 15, Vol. XII. p. 249.

‡‡ *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 47. (P.)

§§ *Ibid.* p. 30. (P.)

||| *Euterpe* (L. ii.), p. 156. (P.)

¶¶ *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 8. (P.)

*** *Ibid.* p. 64. (P.)

also *BROMIUS* by the *Greeks*; *CRISHNA*, or *VISHNU*, is *APOLLO*, and *CRISHNA* in *Irish*, means the *SUN*.* According to the *Vedas*, and other sacred books, a bad genius, or giant, seizes on the sun and moon when they are eclipsed, and the Egyptians ascribed the same thing to their *Typhon*, who was said even to have swallowed their god *Horus*, or the *Sun*.†

The Egyptians at certain festivals carried the images of their gods in procession. *Herodotus* says they drew one of them on a carriage with four wheels,‡ and the same is now done by the *Hindoos*.§ The Egyptians held *cows* in much greater veneration than any other animals.|| They were sacred to *Isis*, and never sacrificed. Some superstitious respect was also paid to horned cattle by the ancient Persians. In an account of the *Zendavesta*, *Ormud*, the Supreme Being, “directs *Zerdusht* to render the worship of prayer and praise to the *supreme ox*, and to the *rain*, of which the angel *Taschter*, is the distributor, who subsists in the form of an ox.”¶ The *Hindoos* make some use of the image of a bull, as *M. Sonnerat* informs us in his account of some of their temples, though they do not carry their superstition in this respect so far as the *Egyptians*, who made live bulls the immediate objects of their worship.

Though there may be something of bold conjecture, and, consequently, of uncertainty, in some of these suppositions, they seem to be pretty well supported by the writers referred to; and it is evident on the whole, that at least a system very similar to that of the present *Hindoos* must have been of very great antiquity, and prior to the general dispersion of mankind. For though similar situations may lead to similar sentiments, and corresponding practices, among men living at a great distance from each other, the above-mentioned similarity is too great, and extends to too many particulars, to be accounted for in this way.

It is not at all extraordinary that men who had no communication with each other should be equally worshippers of the sun, moon and stars; that they should fancy deep

* *Dissert. on Asia*, I. pp. 53—62. (P.)

† *L'Ezour-Védam* (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. p. 24. (P.) “Suivant le *Védam* et les autres livres sacrés, un mauvais génie ou un géant se saisit du soleil et de la lune, et les obscurcit; ce qui occasionne les éclipses. Le peuple d’Egypte en rapportoit aussi la cause à *Typhon*, qui avaloit l’œil d’*Horus*, c’est-à-dire, le soleil.” *Ibid.*

‡ *Euterpe* (L. ii.), p. 63. (P.)

§ See *Beloe's Herod.* Ed. 2, 1806, I. p. 387, *Note*.

|| *Euterpe* (L. ii.), p. 41. (P.)

¶ *Ann. Reg.* 1762, V. p. 117. (P.) *Zend-Avesta*, 1771, I. Pt. ii. p. 424.

caverns, or thick woods, to be haunted with spirits; that particular rivers should have their several genii, or deities, dispensing their waters at their pleasure, as the sun, they might suppose, did his heat, and the moon, the stars, and the planets, their peculiar influences. But that they should adopt the same *rites* in the worship of these natural deities, and, especially, that they should give them *attributes*, and even *names*, so nearly alike, is beyond the effect of accident.

But though this consideration proves the great antiquity of the general outline of the *Hindoo* religion, it is impossible that a system so extensive and complex as this is, and implying such abstruse metaphysics, should have been completed at a very early period. Though erroneous, wild and absurd in the extreme, as it will soon be seen to be, it must have been the result of much reflection, which necessarily requires leisure; and this must have been subsequent to the rudest ages of mankind. I cannot help concluding, therefore, that independently of any positive evidence, it could not have had its origin long before the time of *Moses*. There is, consequently, nothing unfair in the comparison that I propose. Whether *Moses* was acquainted with this system or not, it will appear, contrary to the opinion of M. *Langles*, that he was far from deriving any advantage from it; and there is not in his writings any allusion to *books* pretended to be sacred, as the *Vedas*, but only to such *practices* as were common to the *Hindoos* and other Heathen nations.

SECTION III.

Of the Vedas and other sacred Books of the Hindoos.

THE books called *Vedas*, or the sacred books of the *Hindoos*, the antiquity of which has been considered, are said to have been originally numerous, but to have been reduced to *four* by *VYASA*.* In *La Croze*, I find the mention of *five*,† and in imitation or abridgment of them, M. *Langles* supposes *the five books of Moses* to have been written.‡ However, in the most ancient writings in which they are quoted, or referred to, especially the *Institutes of*

* *Dissert. on Asia*, II. pp. 98, 99. (P.)

† *Histoire*, II. p. 291. (P.) “ Dans le dixième monde commença à exister un livre de la loi, intitulé *Jrukka-Védoum*, qui fut substitué au cinquième livre du *Védum*, ou de la loi ancienne. Ce cinquième livre est perdu depuis une infinité d'années.” *Ibid*.

‡ See *supra*, p. 139.

Menu, a work next in antiquity and authority to the *Vedas* themselves, no mention is made of more than *three*.* The *fourth*, Sir William Jones says, is a later composition, as is evident from the language in which it is written, which is comparatively modern, and, therefore, easily understood; whereas there are but “few *Bráhmans* who can understand any part” of the *three* first.† They are now very scarce, but there are comments upon them written in a very early period.

These *Vedas* are said by the *Hindoos* to have been dictated by the Supreme Being, or at least by *Brahma*, the creative power, to the first man. MENU, who is the speaker in the *Institutes*, says, what, however, I do not pretend to explain, “From fire, from air, and from the sun, he” (viz. BRAHMA) “milked out, as it were, the three primordial *Vedas*, named *Rich*, *Yajush* and *Sáman*, for the due performance of the sacrifice. He gave being to time, and the divisions of time, to the stars also, and to the planets, to rivers, oceans and mountains, to level plains, and uneven valleys.”‡

From the French translator of *L' Ezour-Védam*, I collect the following account of the composition of the *Vedas*. The son of *Brahma*, he says, retiring to a desert, composed the *Védam* in four books,§ each being transcribed by a different person;|| but the last was written in a dialect different from the three first.¶ Afterwards, he says, *Viassen* added a *fifth* book, the four first being forbidden to the *Choutres*.**

In whatever manner these books were composed, nothing can exceed the encomiums which the *Hindoos* make of them. In the *Institutes of Menu* it is said, “To patriarchs, to deities, and to mankind, the Scripture is an eye-giving constant light; nor could the *Véda Sástra* have been made

* *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 106. (P.)

† *Ibid.* pp. 107, 108. (P.)

‡ *Instit.* p. 4. (P.) Ch. i. 23, 24; Jones, VII. p. 95.

§ *L' Ezour-Védam* (Obs. Prelim.), I. p. 114. (P.) “*Viassen*, fils de *Bramma*, s' étant retiré dans le désert appelé *Baduby Cassiran*, s' appliqua à acquérir toutes les connoissances qui concernent la Divinité. Il mit ensuite par écrit le *Védam*, et partagea cet ouvrage en quatre livres.” *Ibid.*

|| “Chacun d' eux les communiqua à ses enfans et les leurs fit apprendre. Ceux-ci les communiquèrent de même à leurs descendans. C' est par-là qu' ils sont parvenus jusqu' à nous.” *Ibid.* p. 204.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 120. (P.) “Ce *vède* a été composé originairement dans un dialecte du *Samscretan* peu usité, et un très-petit nombre de personnes se flattent de l' entendre.” *Ibid.*

** *Ibid.* pp. 120, 121. (P.) “La lecture des quatre *vèdes*—étant interdite aux *Choutres*, *Viassen* en composa, en faveur de cette quatrième caste, un *cinquième*, nommé *Baradam*, où il mit tous les mystères de la religion Indienne, et y traita de la pratique de la vertu, et des distinctions de chaque état.” *Ibid.*

by human faculties; nor can it be measured by human reason, *unassisted by revealed glosses and comments*: this is a sure proposition.”* We shall soon, however, I hope, have an opportunity of judging for ourselves. In the mean time I shall give my readers a specimen of the fourth *Veda*, as translated by Sir William Jones.

“Where they who know the Great One go, through holy rites, and through piety, thither may *fire* raise me! May fire receive my sacrifices! Mysterious praise to fire! May *air* waft me thither. May air increase my spirits. Mysterious praise to air! May the *sun* draw me thither! May the sun enlighten my eye! Mysterious praise to the sun! May the *moon* bear me thither! May the moon receive my mind! Mysterious praise to the moon! May the plant *sóma* lead me thither! May *sóma* bestow on me its hallowed milk! Mysterious praise to *sóma*! May *INDRA*, or the *firmament*, carry me thither! May *INDRA* give me strength! Mysterious praise to *INDRA*. May *water* bear me thither! May water bring me the stream of immortality! Mysterious praise to the waters! Where they who know the Great One go, through holy rites, and through piety, thither may *BRAHMA*’ conduct me! May *BRAHMA*’ lead me to the Great One! Mysterious praise to *BRAHMA*’!”†

Whether this passage be perused with admiration, and be deemed sublime, as it may be by some, or be thought extravagant and ridiculous, as it will by others, it will not be easy to find a passage resembling it in any of the *five books of Moses*. M. *Langles* will probably look for its counterpart in the book of *Numbers*, which is the *fourth* of the *Pentateuch*, as this is from the *fourth* of the *Vedas*.

As Mr. Dow’s account of the *Vedas* is considerably different from that of other writers, I shall give it unmixed with any other, from the *Preliminary Dissertation* prefixed to his *History of Hindostan*.

“The Hindoos are divided into two great religious sects: the followers of the doctrine of the *BEDANG*; and those who adhere to the principles of the *NEADIRSEN*.—The first are esteemed the most orthodox, as well as the most ancient.—Bedang, the title of the Shaster, or commentary upon the Bedas,—is a word compounded of Beda, *science*, and *Ang*, *body*. The name of this Shaster, therefore, may

* *Instit.* p. 357. (P.) Ch. xii. 94; *Jones*, VIII. p. 145.

† *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 108. (P.) *Asiatic Researches*, 1788, (Calcutta,) I. p. 348.

be literally translated *the body of science*.—Almost all the Hindoos of the Decan, and those of the Malabar and Coromandel coasts, are of the sect of the Bedang.”*

“The four *Bedas* contain 100,000 *ashlogues*, or stanzas, in verse, each of which consists of four lines. The first *Beda* is called *RUG BEDA*, which signifies the science of divination, concerning which it principally treats. It also contains astrology, astronomy, natural philosophy, and a particular account of the creation of matter, and the formation of the world.

“The second *Beda* is distinguished by the name of *Sheham*. That word signifies piety, or devotion, and this book accordingly treats of all religious and moral duties. It also contains many hymns in praise of the Supreme Being, as well as verses in honour of subaltern intelligences.

“The third is the *JUDGER BEDA*, which, as the word implies, comprehends the whole science of religious rites and ceremonies; such as fasts, festivals, purifications, penances, pilgrimages, sacrifices, prayers and offerings. They give the appellation of *OBATAR BAH* to the fourth *Beda*. *OBATAR* signifies in the *Shanscrita*, the being, or the essence, and *BAH*, good; so that the *Obatar bah* is literally the knowledge of the good being; and, accordingly, this book comprehends the whole science of theology, and metaphysical philosophy.

“The language of the *Obatar Bah Beda* is now become obsolete; so that very few Brahmins pretend to read it with propriety. Whether this proceeds from its great antiquity, or from its being written in an uncommon dialect of the *Shanscrita*, is hard to determine. We are inclined to believe that the first is the truth, for we can by no means agree with a late ingenious writer, (Mr. Holwell,) who affirms that the *Obatar Bah* was written in a period posterior to the rest of the *Bedas*.”† Since, however, Sir William Jones asserts this, there will be no doubt but that Mr. Dow is in an error in this respect.

“*NEADIRSEN* is a compound from *NEA*, signifying right, and *DIRSEN*, to teach or explain; so that the word may be translated an *exhibition of truth*. Though it is not reckoned so ancient as the *Bedang*, yet it is said to have been written by a philosopher called *Goutam*, near four thousand years ago. The philosophy contained in this *Shaster* is very abstruse and metaphysical.—The generality of the Hindoos of

* *History of Indostan*, I. p. xxxviii.

† *Ibid.* pp. xxviii, xxix.

Bengal, and all the northern provinces of Hindostan, esteem the NEADIRSEN a sacred Shaster; but those of the Decan, Coromandel, and Malabar, totally reject it. It consists of seven volumes," the first of which Mr. Dow procured, and "deposited it in the British Museum."*

The author of *Neadirsén* maintains "that the *vital soul* is different from the *great soul*;—and it is on this head that the followers of the Bedang and Neadirsén are principally divided."† The meaning probably is, that the principle of intelligence which animates the inferior beings, was not an emanation from the *Supreme Mind*, and is not to be absorbed into it again, which the other *Hindoos* maintain.

Besides the four *Vedas*, of which we have not as yet any translation into an European language, there are other *Hindoo* books which are allowed to contain a faithful account of their doctrines, and some of these we have in French or English. There are more particularly eighteen, which bear the title of *Puránas*, ascribed, says Sir William Jones, to VYASA, whose philosophy is compared to that of PLATO.‡ Of these the *Bagavadam* is one. This work, according to the translator of *L' Ezour-Védam*, "contains some excellent moral precepts; but, he says, they cannot compensate for an immense number of extravagant absurdities and fabulous histories, which fatigue the imagination and excite nausea."§ These *Puránas* must be the same with the *Aughtorrah Bhade* of Mr. Holwell, and the *Neadirsén* of Mr. Dow.

We have "a Code of Gentoo Laws,"|| compiled by *Hindoo pundits*, or learned Bramins,¶ with a large Preface, containing an "Account of the Creation," and other general principles of their faith. Of this work I shall make great use. But a work of more importance to my purpose is entitled, "Institutes of Hindu Law, or the Ordinances of Menu, comprising the Indian System of Duties, Religious

* *History of Indostan*, pp. lv., lvi.

† *Ibid.* p. lviii.

‡ *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 115. (P.)

§ *L' Ezour-Védam*, I. p. 130. (P.) "Le *Bagavadam* renferme d'excellens préceptes de morale, mais—ils ne peuvent compenser une foule d'extravagances, d'absurdités et d'histoires fabuleuses qui fatiguent l'imagination et provoquent la nausée." *Ibid.*

|| See *supra*, p. 144, Note †.

¶ At the instance of the Governor General, Warren Hastings, eleven Bramins "were invited from all parts of the kingdom to Calcutta, and the most authentic books, both ancient and modern, were collected, and the original text, delivered in the Hindoo language, was faithfully translated by the interpreters into the Persian idiom. They began their work in May 1773, and finished it by February 1775." *Gentoo Laws*, pp. lxxiv., lxxv.

and Civil, verbally translated from the original Sanscrit by Sir William Jones.*

These *ordinances* announce their being delivered by BHRIGU, the son of MENU, when the sages of India applied to him for instruction. An idea of the authority of this work may be conceived from the introduction to it, in which MENU himself is represented as saying concerning BRAHMA, "He having enacted this code of laws, himself taught it fully to me in the beginning. Afterwards I taught it MAR'CHI, and the *nine* other holy sages. This *my son* BHRIGU will repeat the divine code to you, without omission." After this we read, "BHRIGU, great and wise, having thus been appointed by MENU to promulge his laws, addressed all the RISHIS with an affectionate mind, saying: Hear!"†

The work concludes as follows: "Thus did the all-wise MENU, who possesses extensive dominion, and blazes with heavenly splendour, disclose to me, from his benevolence to mankind, this transcendant system of law, which must be kept devoutly concealed *from persons unfit to receive it.*"‡ It will be seen that the *Bramins* alone have the custody of the *Hindoo* laws, and they were not to communicate them to all the people promiscuously. Though, therefore, we are not in possession of the *Vedas*, we may safely rely on the testimony of the *Hindoo Bramins*, thus solemnly given, for the most important of their doctrines.

There is another work on the Hindoo theology, entitled *L'Ezour-Védam*, which I shall sometimes quote, though M. Sonnerat says, that its importance has been greatly magnified by Voltaire and others, when it is in fact the composition of some Christian missionary;§ and from the perusal of it, this will hardly be questioned. This writer, however, from his long residence in *Hindustan*, was probably well acquainted with the *Hindoo* system.

* Printed at Calcutta, 1794. (See Sir W. Jones's Letter to Mr. Dundas, *Works*, VIII. pp. 157, 158.) Reprinted London, 1796. See *New Ann. Reg.* XVII. p. 190. In the Letter, dated Calcutta, March 1, 1794, a very few weeks before Sir W. Jones's lamented decease, he proposed, after having completed a voluminous "Digest of Indian Laws," immediately to resign his *judgeship*, with an "anxious wish to pass the remainder of life in studious retirement." *Works*, VIII. p. 157.

† *Instit.* p. 8. (P.) Ch. i. 58—60; *Jones*, VII. pp. 100, 101.

‡ *Instit.* p. 361. (P.) Ch. xii. 117; *Jones*, VIII. p. 149.

§ *Voyages aux Ind. Orient.* 1774—1781, Paris, I. p. 215. (P.) "On voit que l'auteur a voulu tout ramener à la religion Chrétienne, en y laissant cependant quelques erreurs, afin qu'on ne reconnût pas le missionnaire sous le manteau du Brame. C'est donc à tort que M. de Voltaire, et quelques autres, donnent à ce livre une importance qu'il ne mérite pas, et le regardent comme canonique." *Ibid.* See *supra*, p. 143, Note †.

SECTION IV.

Of the Agreement of the Hindoo Principles and Traditions, and those of other ancient Nations, with the Writings of Moses.

BEFORE I point out the difference between the institutions of the *Hindoos*, &c. and those of *Moses*, I shall mention some remarkable particulars in which they agree. And as the writings and traditions of the *Hindoos* are unquestionably very ancient, they may be justly considered as testimonies in favour of the truth of the Mosaic history.

La Croze justly observes, that the *Hindoos* have preserved the knowledge of the Supreme Being, when the Greeks, and other more polished nations in the western parts of the world, had lost sight of him, their attention being engrossed by inferior objects of worship.* Some of their descriptions of the Supreme Being are just and truly sublime. In the *Institutes of Menu* he is said to be one “whom the mind alone can perceive, whose essence eludes the external organs, who has no visible parts, who exists from eternity, the soul of all beings, whom no being can comprehend.”† They also say, according to the translator of *L' Ezour-Védam*, that goodness is the very essence of God.‡

The religion of the northern European nations was in several respects similar to that of the *Hindoos*, and of other Eastern nations; and in “the ancient Icelandic mythology,” God is said to be “the author of every thing that existeth; the eternal, the ancient, the living and awful Being, the searcher into concealed things, the Being that never changeth;” and these people held in contempt “the polytheism of those nations who treated them as barbarians.”§ It is probable that it was not till the arrival of *Odin*, or his disciples, that the religion of the ancient *Danes* and *Scandinavians* began to lose its original purity. In that part of the world many persons after this time continued to despise the vulgar polytheism, and adhered to their ancient worship.||

* *Histoire*, II. pp. 218, 219. (P.) “C'est un avantage que ce Paganisme Indien a au-dessus du Grec et du Romain, où l'existence du vrai Dieu, qui n'étoit connue que d'un petit nombre de philosophes, n'entroit pour rien dans la religion des peuples, qui n'élevoient jamais leur entendement ni leur culte au-dessus des objets qui leur étoient représentés par leurs idoles.” *Ibid.*

† *Instit.* p. 201. (P.) Ch. i. 7. *Jones*, VII. p. 92.

‡ *L' Ezour-Védam*, I. p. 201. (P.) “Dieu, dont la bonté fait l'essence.” *Ibid.*

§ *Mallett's Northern Antiquities*, 1770, I. pp. 78, 84. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 151. (P.)

If the representations of Mr. Holwell may be depended upon, the most raised ideas of the Hindoos concerning the Supreme Being fall far short of those that were entertained by the Hebrews. He says, "The *Shastah* opens by denying the prescience of God touching the actions of free agents;"* whereas, according to the writings of *Moses*, many things are foreseen, and distinctly foretold, by God, which depend on the voluntary actions of men, and even in distant ages. Also the long contest, the following account of which Mr. Holwell says he copied from the *Shastah*, of the Supreme Being with two opposing powers, does not agree with the omnipotence which the Hebrew Scriptures uniformly ascribe to him. "When the eternal *One* first began his intended new creation of the *Dunneahoudah*, he was opposed by two mighty *Ossoors*,† which proceeded from the wax of *Brumma's* ear, and their names were *Modoo*‡ and *Kytoos*§ And the eternal *One* contended and fought with *Modoo* and *Kytoos*, five thousand years, and he smote them on his thigh,|| and they were lost, and assimilated with *Murto*."¶

There was something similar to this in the Persian system, according to the extracts from the *Zendavesta*. "Ahriman interrupted the order of the universe, raised an army against Ormusd; and having maintained a fight against him during four-score and ten days, was at length vanquished by Honover, the divine word."**

In the *Hindoo* system the first production of the Supreme Being was something similar to the chaos of *Moses*, an earth covered with water, and what is more particular, they speak of the *spirit of God* as moving upon it. "The waters," says *Menu*, "are called *nára*, because they were the production of *NARA*, or the *spirit of God*; and since they were his first *Ayana*, or *place of motion*, he thence is named *NA'RA'-YANA*, or *moving on the waters*."††

One of the *Hindoo* fables, related by father *Bouchet*,‡‡ bears some resemblance to the Mosaic history of paradise. "The inferior gods, who have ever since the creation been

* *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 46. (P.)

† "The common appellation given to *giants*, but is variously used in the *Shastah* to express *exerescence*, *excretion*, and *secretion*." *Holwell's Note*.

‡ "Discord, enmity." *Ibid*.

§ "Confusion, tumult." *Ibid*.

|| "Reduced them to subjection, or obedience; touching the thigh, amongst the ancient *Gentoos*, was a token of subjection." *Ibid*.

¶ *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. pp. 106, 107. (P.)

** *Ann. Reg.* (1762), V. p. 126. (P.)

†† *Instit.* p. 2. (P.) Ch. i. 10; *Jones*, VII. p. 93.

‡‡ "A Jesuit Missionary to *Maduras*," in "A Letter to M. Huët, Bishop of *Avranches*." See *Picart's Religious Ceremonies*, 1731, III. pp. 397—407.

multiplying themselves almost to infinity, did not at first enjoy the privilege of immortality. After numberless endeavours to procure it, they had recourse to a tree, the leaf of which grew in *Chorcām*, or Paradise, and met with success, so that by eating from time to time of the fruit of this tree, they obtained this advantage. At length a serpent, called *Chien*, perceived that the tree of life had been found out by the gods of the second class, and, probably, having been appointed to guard it, was so exasperated at being overreached, that he poured out a great quantity of poison. The whole earth felt the dreadful effects of it, and not one mortal would have escaped, had not the god *Chiven*, taking pity on the human race, revealed himself under the shape of a man, and swallowed the poison.*

According to *Tavernier*, the *Hindoos* say, that the first man was called Adam, and the first woman *Mamaniva*.† And, according to Mr. Lord, the *Persees* have preserved an account of the creation corresponding to that of Moses in more particulars. For they say, that the Supreme Being “did divide this great work of the creation into a sixfold labour;” that “his sixth labour was the forming of man and woman, (to whom the rest of the creatures were made ministratory and servile,) whose name their records deliver to be *Adamah* and *Evah*.”‡ They also, he says, “observe six festivals in the year, and these feasts are celebrated for five days together, each of them according to the six works of the creation.”§ *Niebuhr* says, that the festivals of this people continue five days, in commemoration of some parts of the creation.||

The evil being *Ahriman*, they farther say, “got upon the earth in the form of a serpent,” and seduced the first human pair “from their allegiance to Ormusd, by persuading them that he was himself the sole author of all that existed. The man and woman both believing him, became criminal, and this sin will perpetuate itself till the resurrection.”¶

* *Ceremonies and Religious Customs*—abridged from the French original by B. Picart, 1741, p. 388. (P.) *Picart*, 1731, III. pp. 399, 400.

† *Voyages*, 1718, II. p. 421. (P.) Among the objects of worship at *Surat*, this traveller describes, “un monstre qui est comme la tête d’une femme difforme, qu’ils disent être la figure de la première femme laquelle ils appellent *Mamaniva*. Ils assemblent tous les jours une grande quantité d’idolâtres qui vont adorer ce monstre.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Religion of the Persees*, 4to, 1680, p. 7. I have quoted Mr. Lord’s words. Dr. Priestley, for want of the original, translated the passages from the “*Histoire de la Religion des Perses*” de Henry Lord.” 12mo. 1667.

§ *Ibid*. p. 41.

|| *Voyage en Arabie*, 1780, II. p. 163. (P.)

¶ *Zendavesta in Ann. Reg.* (1762), V. p. 127. (P.)

I have already observed that “the Hindoos divide time into periods of *seven* days,* and that the days of the week are named in the *Shanscrit* language from the same planets to which they were assigned by the Greeks and Romans.”† On the coast of *Malabar* several acts of worship are performed on Fridays.‡ The people of *Siam*, the *Jesuits* say, make a kind of *Sunday*, every seventh day, spending it in prayer and fasting. They also give the same names to the different days of the week that are given to them in *Hindostan*:§

In agreement, at least in part, with the account of *Moses*, the Hindoos say, “that in the first ages of the world men were greatly superior to the present race, both in the length of their lives, and in the power of their bodies and mental faculties; but that, in consequence of vice, they gradually declined.||

The Hindoos have preserved an unequivocal tradition of an *universal deluge*. In “the first Indian history that is now extant,” says Sir William Jones, “the story, though whimsically dressed up in the form of an allegory, seems to prove a primeval tradition in this country of the *universal deluge*, described by *Moses*,”¶ and “the three first *Avatàrs*, or descents of *VISHNU*, relate clearly” to the same event, “in which eight persons only were saved.”**

The following curious account of this deluge is given by Father *Bouchet* in his letter from *Indostan*: “The god *Routren*, who is the grand destroyer of all created beings, resolved one day to destroy all mankind, pretending that he had just reasons for being dissatisfied with their behaviour. This design was not kept so secret, but it was found out by *Vichnou*, the preserver of all creatures; who discovered the very day on which the flood was to take place. Though his power did not extend so far as to suspend the execution of what the god *Routren* had resolved upon, yet, as he was the preserver of all created beings, he had a right to prevent, if possible, the pernicious effects of it, and he took the following method for that purpose.

* *Six*. See *Persees*, p. 160.

† *Gentoo Laws*, (Halhed's *Pref.*) p. xl. (P.)

‡ Phillips's *Account of Malabar*, 1717, p. 59. (P.)

§ “Relation of the Voyage to Siam performed (1685) by Six Jesuits,” 1688, pp. 284, 306. (P.)

|| *Sketches*, I. p. 296. (P.)

¶ *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 21. (P.) See an *Epitome* of the History, *ibid.* pp. 15—21.

** *Ibid.* p. 109. (P.)

“ He appeared one day to *Sattiavarti*, his great confident, and privately assured him, that an universal flood would soon happen ; that the whole earth would be covered with water, and that the design of *Routren* was nothing less than the destruction of all mankind, and of every animal. He nevertheless assured him, that he himself did not need to be under any apprehension ; for that, in spite of *Routren*, he would find an opportunity to preserve him, and that he would take such measures as that the world should afterwards be repopled. His design was to make a wonderful bark rise up of a sudden, at a time when *Routren* should least suspect any such thing, and to store it with a large provision of souls, and seeds of beings, eight hundred and forty millions at least. As for *Sattiavarti*, he was at the time of the flood to be on a very high mountain, which he pointed out to him very exactly.

“ Some time after this, *Sattiavarti*, as had been foretold him, perceived a multitude of clouds drawing together, but beheld with unconcern the storm which was gathering over the heads of the guilty ; when the most dreadful rain that had ever been seen, poured down from the skies, the rivers swelled and spread themselves with rapidity over the surface of the whole earth ; the sea broke its appointed bounds, and mixing with the rivers, which now had left their channels, soon covered the highest mountains. Trees, animals, men, cities and kingdoms, were all drowned ; in a word, all animated beings were instantly destroyed.

“ In the mean time *Sattiavarti*, with some of his penitents, had withdrawn to the appointed mountain, where he waited for the succour which the god had promised him. However, this did not prevent his being seized with some short intervals of terror ; as the water gathered strength continually, and each moment drew nearer to his *asylum*. But that very instant, which he thought would have been his last, he saw the bark that was to save him, and immediately got into it with all the devotees in his company, and also the eight hundred and forty millions of souls, and seeds of all beings.

“ The difficulty now was to steer the bark, and preserve it from the impetuosity of the waves, which raged with prodigious violence. But *Vichnou* took care of this ; for immediately assuming the form of a fish, he steered the vessel with his tail, as though it had been a rudder. This god, who was now both fish and pilot, performed his part so well, that *Sattiavarti* waited very quietly in his *asylum* till such

time as the waters were run off from the surface of the earth."*

The translator of *L' Ezour-Védam* says, that according to the *Pouranas*,† eight persons escaped the general deluge.‡ “The Chinese,” too, says Sir William Jones, “like the *Hindus*, believe this earth to have been wholly covered with water, which, in works of undisputed authenticity, they describe as *flowing abundantly, then subsiding, and separating the higher from the lower age of mankind*; that the *division of time*, from which their poetical history begins, preceded the appearance of FOHI on the mountains of *Chin*.”§ “A learned follower of ZERA'TUSHT” informed him, “that in the books which the *Behdins* hold sacred, mention is made of an *universal inundation*, there named the deluge of TIME.”|| And according to Mr. Lord, the *Persees* say, that by the temptation of *Lucifer* men became wicked, and God destroyed them with a deluge, except a few, from whom the world was peopled anew; that “the first of a race of kings was *Guiomaras*,—the son of *Aram*, the son of *Sem*, the son of *Noah*, by the *Persees* called *Adam Asseny*, that is, the second *Adam*.”¶ By the *Hindoos* *Noah* is called “VAI-VASWATA, or child of the SUN,” as well as SATYAVRATA, and “by the *Arabs*,” he “was called NUH.”**

“The fourth and fifth *Avatâr* of the *Hindus*,” Sir William Jones says, relate “to the *punishment of impiety*, and the *humiliation of the proud*,” and refer, as he thinks, “to the dispersion from *Babel*,” and thence he infers “that the

* *Religious Ceremonies*, p. 388. (P.) *Picart*, 1731, p. 400.

† *L' Ezour-Védam* (*Eclairciss.*), II. p. 206. (P.) “Un des XVIII. *Pouranams*, qui renferme la doctrine enseignée par *Vichnou*, selon les *Indiens*.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. (P.) § *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 226. (P.)

|| *Ibid*. p. 29. (P.)

¶ *Religion of the Persees*, p. 9.

** *Dissert. on Asia*, I. pp. 14, 28. (P.) Dr. *Priestley* subjoined to this quotation the following paragraph :

“A curious account of the intoxication of *Noah*, and of the behaviour of his three sons on the occasion, is given us from the *Hindoo* writings in the third volume of *Asiatic Researches*, which, though I quoted in a former work [Vol. XVI. pp. 11, 12], I shall not omit here, being so much to my present purpose.”

This account is now omitted because I have been reminded by a friend of what had escaped my recollection, when editing Vol. XVI., that the passage, since Dr. *Priestley* wrote, has been ascertained to be a palpable forgery.

Captain *Wilford*, in his “*Essay on the Sacred Isles in the West*,” communicated to the *Asiatic Society* in 1805, fully explained the manner in which his *Pandit* deceived him as to this story, of which “there is not a word to be found in that *Purânâ* (the *Padmapurân*).” He adds, “It is, however, mentioned, though in less explicit terms, in many *Purânâs*, and the *Pandit* took particular care in pointing out to me several passages which confirmed, more or less, this interesting legend.—The rest of the legend, about the intoxication of *Noah*, is from what my *Pandit* picked up in conversation with me.” *Asiatic Researches*, VIII. p. 254. See Lord *Teigumouth's* Life of Sir W. Jones, *Pref.* p. xiii., Note.

second, or silver age of the *Hindus*, was subsequent" to that event.* Farther than this, the translator of *L'Ezour-Védam* says that, in the *Bagavadam*, there are, besides the *Mosiac* account of the deluge, the principal circumstances of the history of *Ishmael*, and the sacrifice of *Isaac*.†

There are, indeed, several things in the *Hindoo* traditions which greatly resemble some in the history of *Abraham*. "Raja Tára, say they, who is placed in the first age of the Cal Jug, had a son who apostatized from the *Hindoo* faith, for which he was banished by his father to the West. The apostate fixed his residence in a country called Mohgod, and propagated the Jewish religion, which the impostor Mahommed further corrupted."‡

Brahma, the *Hindoo* lawgiver, very much resembles *Abraham*, and his wife *Sarasvadi*, *Sarah*, the termination *vadi* signifying *lady*.§ The *Hindoos* also relate of one of their penitents, that God required of him the sacrifice of his son, but was contented with his obedience, and would not suffer him to put his son to death. Some, however, say that he was sacrificed, but that God afterwards raised him from the dead.||

There is something that very much resembles the history of *Moses* in that of one of the relations of *Christen*, and of *Christen* himself. And in the following history, related by the same Father *Bouchet*, there is a striking resemblance to that of *Job*; and it certainly furnishes an argument for the very great antiquity of the history.

"The gods met one day in their *Chocan*, or paradise of delights. *Devendiren*, the god of glory, presided in this illustrious assembly, which was crowded with gods and goddesses. The most famous penitents had also a place in it, particularly the seven chief anchorets. After some indifferent discourse, the following question was proposed, viz. whether it was possible to find a faultless prince among mankind. They almost all asserted that there was not one but was subject to great vices; and the partisans of this opinion were headed by *Vichouva Moutren*. But the famous *Vachichten* opposed him, maintaining that king *Achandiren*, his disciple, had no fault. On this *Vichouva Moutren*,

* *Dissert. on Asia*, I. pp. 109, 110. (P.)

† *Obs. Prelim.* I. p. 84. (P.) "On retrouve même dans le *Bagavadam* les principales circonstances du récit de Moïse sur le déluge, sur l'histoire d'Ismaël, et le sacrifice d'Isaac." *Ibid.*

‡ *Dow's Hindostan*, I. (Pref.) p. vii. (P.)

§ *Bouchet in Rel. Cer.* p. 381. (P.) *Picart*, 1731, p. 401.

|| *Rel. Cer.* p. 381. (P.) *Picart*, 1731, p. 401.

who is of so imperious a temper that he cannot bear any contradiction, fell into a great passion, and assured the gods he would soon shew them the defects of this prince, if they would give him up to him. *Vachichten* accepted the challenge, when it was stipulated that he whose assertion should prove false, should give up to the other all the merit he had acquired by a long series of penance. And now king *Achandiren* became the victim of this dispute. *Vichouva Moutren* put him to every kind of trial, reducing him to extreme poverty, dispossessing him of his kingdom, taking the life of his only son, and carrying off his wife *Chandavandi*.

“Notwithstanding all these misfortunes, the prince continued so stedfast in the practice of all the virtues, that the gods themselves, who put him to all these trials, would infallibly have sunk under them; and they rewarded him with uncommon liberality. They embraced him one after another, and even the goddesses made him their compliments. They restored his wife to him, and raised up his son; after which *Vichouva Moutren*, pursuant to the agreement, resigned all the merit he had acquired, to *Vachichten*, who made a present of it to *Achandiren*; and the vanquished *Vichouva Moutren* went away with great regret, to begin again a long series of penance, in order, if possible, to acquire a stock of fresh merit.”*

In the *Hindoo* code we find some of the more extraordinary laws and customs of the *Hebrew* nation, such as were never received in the western part of the world; as that of a man taking the widow of his brother in order to keep up his family, “On failure of issue by the husband,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “if he be of the servile class, the desired offspring may be procreated, either by his brother, or some other *Sapinda*, on the wife, who has been duly authorized. Sprinkled with clarified butter, silent, in the night, let the kinsman thus appointed beget one son, but a second by no means, on the widow or childless wife.”† But the condition on which the legitimacy of this child depended must have been difficult to ascertain. For it is added, “Should a wife, even though legally authorized, produce a son by a brother, or any other *Sapinda* of her husband, that son, if begotten with impure desire, the sages proclaim base born, and incapable of inheriting.”‡

Polygamy is allowed to the *Hindoos*, as it was to the

* *Rel. Cer.* p. 383. (P.)

† *Instit.* p. 253. (P.) Ch. ix. 59, 60; *Jones*, VIII. p. 11.

‡ *Instit.* p. 264. (P.) Ch. ix. 147; *Jones*, VIII. p. 26.

Hebrews. The following law relates to this case: "If, after one damsel has been shewn, another be offered to the bridegroom, *who had purchased leave to marry her from her next kinsman*, he may become the husband of both for the same price: this law *Menu* ordained."* Here too we see that, like the Hebrews, the husband purchased his wife, instead of receiving a fortune with her.

In the Hebrew ritual a goat was turned loose into the wilderness after the high-priest had confessed on his head the sins of the nation, on the annual day of the expiation, and Mr. Maurice says that the Hindoos let loose horse for a the same purpose.†

Lastly, I would observe in this place, that notwithstanding the unreasonable stress that we shall find the *Hindoos* lay on mere external observances of various kinds, so that they must necessarily confine, and wholly engross, the attention of the common people, there are not wanting in their writings, some excellent moral maxims, similar to many in the books of the *Old Testament*, which represent every thing of this kind as insignificant without moral virtue. The following are particularly worthy of notice. To a man contaminated by sensuality, neither the *Vedas*, nor liberality, nor sacrifices, nor strict observances, nor pious austerities ever procure felicity.‡ "A wise man should constantly discharge all moral duties, though he perform not constantly the ceremonies of religion; since he falls low, if, while he performs ceremonial acts only, he discharge not his moral duties."§

A peculiar stress, even too great, is laid on the duties to parents. "By honouring those three" (his father, mother, and preceptor) "a man effectually does whatever ought to be done. This is the highest duty,—and every other act is a subordinate duty.—All duties are completely performed by that man by whom those three are completely honoured; but to him by whom they are dishonoured, all other acts of duty are fruitless."||

* *Instit.* p. 216. (P.) Ch. viii. 204; *Jones*, VII. p. 364.

† *Indian Antiquities*, 1800. (P.)

‡ *Instit.* p. 29. (P.) Ch. ii. 97; *Jones*, VII. p. 127.

§ *Instit.* p. 115. (P.) Ch. iv. 204; *Jones*, VII. pp. 234, 235. The following counsel is worthy of being added. Ch. iv. 175, 176: "Let a man continually take pleasure in truth, in justice, in laudable practices, and in purity; let him chastise those whom he may chastise, in a legal mode; let him keep in subjection his speech, his arm, and his appetite. Wealth and pleasures, repugnant to law, let him shun; and even lawful acts, which may cause future pain, or be offensive to mankind." *Ibid.* p. 230.

|| *Instit.* p. 47. (P.) Ch. ii. 235, 237; *Jones*, VII. pp. 149, 150.

SECTION V.

Of the Creation, and the general Principles of the Hindoo Philosophy.

I SHALL begin my detail of the religious principles of the *Hindoos* with their account of the creation, and the origin of things, which is so very different from that of *Moses*, that he cannot, I think, in this be thought to have copied from them. M. *Langles* says of the authors of the Hindoo system, that “they were venerable institutors, who gave the people precepts of the soundest morality, and metaphysics truly sublime, concealed under the veil of allegory, the sense of which the bulk of the people could not penetrate.”* We shall now see how far this encomium is just.

There is a considerable difference of opinion among the *Hindoos* themselves, on the subject of *creation*; nor can we think this at all extraordinary, when we consider how much there is of mere imagination, and how little of rational evidence in their doctrine. In the following general outline, however, they seem to be all agreed.

They say that, after the Supreme Being had existed alone from all eternity, he resolved to produce other beings. But this production was wholly *from his own substance*; and after a certain period they believe that every thing will be absorbed into him again, when he will exist alone as before. There will, however, be a succession of these creations and absorptions without end. At what time the first creation took place they do not say; but according to them every thing that now exists has existed before, and will hereafter exist again.

The production of all things from the substance of the Divine Being is thus represented by some of the *Bramins*. Comparing the first cause to a spider, they say “the universe was produced by that insect spinning out its own entrails and belly; so that it brought forth first the elements, and secondly the celestial globes, and that things are to continue in this state till the end of ages, when this spider will draw into its body the several threads which had issued from it, when all things will be destroyed, and the world no longer exist, but as in the belly of the spider.†

* *Disc. Prélim.* p. 7. (P.)

† *Bouchet in Rel. Cer.* p. 384. (P.) *Picart*, 1731, p. 409.

This scheme may, no doubt, be called sublime, as is every thing that requires a great stretch of imagination, but what else it has to recommend it I do not see. It is evident, however, that these principles, or similar ones, found their way into Greece, and formed the outline of several of their systems of philosophy. *Plutarch*, in his treatise *on the cessation of oracles*, says, "Amongst the great company of gods which are commonly believed, there is but one who is *eternal* and *immortal*. All the rest, having been born in time, shall end in the death."* And the account which he gives of the extraordinary report of the death of the god *Pan* was received without any mark of surprise.† *Seneca*, the tragedian, says, *Omnes pariter deos perdet mors aliqua*.‡ The *Scandinavians* also supposed their gods to die, and never to come to life again.§

We learn from *Plutarch* that the *Persian Magi* held a system similar to this. "*Theopompus* saith, that according to the opinion of the *Magees*, each of the gods subdues, and is subdued by turns, for the space of three thousand years apiece, and that for three thousand years more they quarrel and fight, and destroy each other's works; but at last that *Pluto* shall fail, and mankind shall be happy, and neither need food nor yield a shadow. And that the god who projects these things doth for some time, take his repose and rest; but yet this time is not much to him, although it seem so to man whose sleep is but short."||

A system coming within the same general outline, strange as it seems to us at this day, was also the philosophy that was maintained by unbelievers in Christianity from the time of *Averroes*. For he held, that there was but one soul in the whole universe, and that after death all separate consciousnesses will cease.¶ And a system very like this, according to Sir William Jones, still prevails in the East, and independently of the rest of the Hindoo principles.

A "metaphysical theology," he says, "has been professed immemorially by a numerous sect of *Persians* and *Hindus*, was carried in part into *Greece*, and prevails even now among the learned *Musulmans*, who sometimes avow it without reserve. The modern philosophers of this persuasion are called *Súfis*.—Their fundamental tenets are, That nothing exists absolutely but God; that the human soul is an

* *Morals*, 1691, IV. p. 24. † *Ibid.* pp. 22, 23. ‡ *Hercules Oetius*. (P.)

§ See Mallett's *North. Antig.* I. p. 115, Note. (P.)

|| *De Iside et Osiride*. (P.) *Morals*, IV. pp. 123, 124.

¶ See Vol. IX. pp. 449, 584—586; Vol. X. p. 80; Vol. XVI. pp. 109, 110.

emanation from his essence, and though divided for a time from its heavenly source, will be finally re-united with it; that the highest possible happiness will arise from this reunion; and that the chief good of mankind in this transitory world, consists in as perfect an *union* with the Eternal Spirit as the incumbrance of a mortal frame will allow; that for this purpose they should break all *connection* with extrinsic objects, and pass through life without *attachments*. Such, in part," says he, "is the religion of the modern *Persian* poets,—the *Vedānti* philosophers, and best Lyric poets of *India*; and as it was a system of the highest antiquity in both nations, it may be added to the many proofs of an immemorial affinity between them."*

In the *Institutes of Menu* we have the following account of the origin of things. Having described the Supreme Being, as was represented before,† viz. as "him whose essence eludes the external organs,—who exists from eternity,—whom no being can comprehend," MENU says, that "HE having willed to produce various beings from his own divine substance, first, with a thought created the waters, and placed in them a productive seed. That *seed* became an egg, bright as gold,—and in that egg he was born himself *in the form of BRAHMA*, the great forefather of all spirits.—In that egg the great power sat inactive a whole year *of the Creator*, at the close of which, by his thought alone, he caused the egg to divide itself; and from its two divisions he framed the heaven *above* and the earth *beneath*. In the midst *he placed* the subtil ether, the eight regions, and the permanent receptacle of waters. From the Supreme Soul he drew forth Mind, existing substantially, though unperceived by sense, immaterial."‡

Thus we see both matter and spirit derived from the same source, viz. the Divine essence. Agreeably to this, *La Croze*, in his account of the system says, "The Supreme Being (say some of these Pagans) having determined to create matter, was obliged to give himself a material form, since a pure spirit cannot act upon corporeal substances."§

The *pundits* who compiled the *Code of Gentoo Laws* do not, in their account of the creation, say that *Burmha* was

* *Dissert. on Asia*, l. pp. 202—204. (P.)

† See *supra*, p. 158.

‡ *Instit.* p. 2. (P.) Ch. i. 8, 9, 12—14; *Jones*, VII. pp. 92, 93.

§ *Histoire*, II. p. 275. (P.) "L'Être souverain, disent quelques-uns de ces Payens, ayant résolu de créer la matière, fut obligé de se donner à lui-même une forme matérielle, un pur esprit n'ayant aucune action sur des êtres corporels." *Ibid.*

the *Supreme Being* himself; but, as may be inferred from their language, a being as different from himself as the earth and the heavens, which they say were produced before him. "The principle of truth," meaning no doubt the *Supreme Being*, they say, "having first formed the earth, and the heavens, and the water, and the fire, and the air, produced a being called *Burmhu*, the *Dewtah*, (that to which all offer their worship,) for the creation of all beings."*

But according to the *Institutes of Menu* though this *Burmha* was the immediate author of four different races of men, or castes, of which an account will be given hereafter, he produced another person called *MENU*, (who is represented as having dictated these *Institutes*,) for the production of other beings. "Having," he says, "divided his own substance, the mighty power became half male, half female, or *nature active and passive*, and from that female he produced *VIRA'J*. Know me—to be that person whom the male power *VIRA'J*—produced by himself; Me, the *secondary* framer of all this *visible world*. It was I, who, desirous of giving birth to a race of men,—first produced ten Lords of created being, eminent in holiness, *MARI'CHI*, *ATRI*, *ANGIRAS*, *PULASTYA*, *PULAHA*, *CRATU*, *PRACHETAS* or *DACHA'*, *VASISHT'HA*, *BHRIGU*, and *NARADA*. They, abundant in glory, produced seven other *Menus*, together with deities, and the mansions of deities, and *Maharshis*, or great sages, unlimited in power; benevolent genii, and fierce giants, blood-thirsty savages, heavenly quiristers, nymphs and demons, huge serpents and snakes of smaller size, birds of mighty wing, and separate companies of *Pitirs*, or progenitors of mankind; lightnings and thunderbolts, clouds and coloured bows of *INDRA*, falling meteors, earth-rending vapours, comets and luminaries of various degrees; horsefaced sylvans, apes, fish, and a variety of birds, tame cattle, deer, men, and ravenous beasts with two rows of teeth, small and large reptiles, moths, lice, fleas, and common flies, with every biting gnat, and immoveable substances of distinct sorts. Thus was this whole assemblage of stationary and moveable bodies framed by those high-minded beings, through the force of their own devotion, and at my command, with separate actions allotted to each."†

According to other accounts, the Supreme Being repro-

* *Prof.* p. xcix. (*P.*)

† *Instit.* p. 6. (*P.*) Ch. i. 32—41; *Jones*, VII. pp. 96, 97.

duced himself, not in one form only, viz. that of *Burmha*, but in three, viz, *Burmha*, with a power of creating, *Vichnou*, with that of preserving, and *Sieb*, that of destroying; the last being sometimes called *Isuren* and also *Ruddery*.* All the three are by the *Malabarians* called *Dirumurtigoi*.†

Vichnou, the second person in this *Hindoo* Trinity, is said to have undergone nine successive incarnations‡ to deliver mankind from so many perilous situations. “The first,” they say, “was in the form of a lion; the second in that of a hog; the third in that of a tortoise; the fourth in a serpent; the fifth that of a *pigmy Brahmin*, a foot and a half high; the sixth in a monster, half man and half lion; the seventh in a dragon; the eighth in a man born of a virgin; the ninth in an ape.” *Bernier*§ adds a tenth, which is to be that of a great cavalier.¶ A very particular and a very different account of these transformations is given by *M. Sonnerat*, with curious representations of each of them.¶¶

Mr. Holwell's account, which he says he found in the *Shastah*, is very different from that given above, and is as follows: “The Eternal One formed other beings in part of his own essence,” (but he mentions no other source of being,) first *Birmah*, *Bistnoo*, and *Sieb*. “To *Birmah*” he assigned “works of power, government and glory; to *Bistnoo*, works of tenderness and benevolence; and to *Sieb*, works of terror, severity and destruction.” He then formed “*Moisasoar*, and all the *Debtah-Logue*,” or the angelic host, subjecting them to *Birmah*, whom “he also constituted his viceregent in heaven, and *Bistnoo* and *Sieb* were established his coadjutors.”

After this, “part of the angelic bands rebelled, and were driven from the face of God; but, by the intercession of the

* See Lord's *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, 1630, p. 35. Dr. Priestley translated from the French. See *supra*, p. 160, Note ‡.

† Phillips's *Account*, p. 4. (P.)

‡ “On compte vingt-une incarnations de Vichenou, dont neuf principales; ce n'est qu'à celles-ci qu'on érige des temples: les autres n'étant qu'une partie du Dieu, sont regardées comme accidentelles, et les livres sacrés qui traitent de ses louanges, ne font le détail que de ces neuf dernières.” *Sonnerat*, I. p. 158.

§ A physician who resided at *Delhi* in 1666. He died at *Paris* in 1688.

¶ *Voyages*, 1723, II. p. 143. (P.) “La première incarnation de la seconde personne fut dans la nature d'un lion; la seconde dans celle d'un pourceau; la troisième en celle d'une tortue; la quatrième dans un serpent; la cinquième dans un pygmée Brahmane haut d'une coudée, la sixième dans un monstre homme-lion; la septième dans un dragon; la huitième né d'une vierge; la neuvième en un singe, et que la dixième se fera en celle d'un grand cavalier.” *Ibid.*

¶¶ *Voyages*, 1782, I. pp. 158—174. (P.) “Incarnations de Vichenou: 1, En poisson; 2, En tortue; 3, En sauglier; 4, Moitié homme et moitié lion; 5, En Brame nain; 6, Sous le nom de rama; 7, Sous le nom de balapatren; 8, Sous le nom de parassourama; 9, Sous le nom de quichena; 10, Sous la forme d'un cheval.” *Ibid.*

faithful remaining bands, he was at length inclined to mercy, and to soften the rigour of their sentence, and instituting *a course only*, of punishment, purgation, and purification." This being intimated to them by *Birmah*, they received it with gratitude, "except the leaders." These, in process of time, regained their influence, and *confirmed* most of the delinquents in their disobedience." At last *Bouannee Drugah*, one of the *Hindoo* deities, is to "descend on the earth, for the destruction of *Moisasoor* and his adherents."* These fallen spirits are those that now animate the bodies of men, animals, and vegetables."

According to Mr. Dow, the author of the *Bedang* maintains that the world was created by God out of nothing, and that it will again be annihilated.† But both these accounts differ so much from those contained in the writings of the *Hindoos* that have lately been translated, all of which represent the creation as an emanation from the substance of the Deity, that I am not disposed to pay much regard to them. The account of the fallen angels is peculiar to Mr. Holwell. Other accounts of the creation may be seen in M. *Sonnerat*.‡

From the idea of the necessity of the mutual action of the male and female principles, to the production of all beings, the *Hindoos*, like the *Egyptians*, were led to form a very indecent representation of the creative power, who, as they said, containing within himself all the principles of the creatures, and the reality of the two sexes, separated them within himself, and therefore under this figure, called *lingam*, representing the male and the female organs, they denote the creator; and the most solemn worship is presented to him under this form.§ It is remarkable, however, that it is the

* *Interesting Historical Events*, Part ii., pp. 8, 9, 10, 35, 129. (P.)

† *Hindostan*, I. (Pref.) pp. xl. xlv. (P.)

‡ *Voyages*, I. p. 278—290. (P.) "Les Indiens sont partagés sur la création de l'univers: les uns croient que tout ce qui existe est une partie de Dieu: qu'à la destruction du monde tout ira se réunir à ce grand Etre, dont il émanait. Les autres soutiennent au contraire que tout vient du néant. Dieu, disent-ils, étant renfermé en lui-même, créa par sa seule volonté un très-petit atôme, dont il tira quatre autres de la même grosseur; rassemblant ensuite ces cinq atômes, il forma un grain de sable imperceptible: d'autres grains extraits de celui-là et combinés, produisirent le ciel, la terre et la mer. Aucune tradition ne dit combien de tems Dieu employa à cette création." *Ibid.* p. 279, 280.

§ *La Croze*, II. p. 275. (P.) "L'Etre souverain, disent-ils, dont tout tire son origine, contenant tous les principes des créatures renferme, nécessairement en soi, l'essence, la force, et la réalité des deux sexes lors qu'il entreprit de créer la nature, il sépara en deux parties ces sexes que jusqu'alors il avoit retenus unis et confondus au-dedans de soi-même. Ce fut à l'aide de ces deux principes, qu'il entra dans les premières voies de la création; et c'est l'idée sous laquelle il s'est proposé à l'adoration des peuples." *Ibid.* See *supra*, p. 170.

third person in their trinity, or the destructive and not the generative power, that is particularly worshipped under this form.

Since it will not be denied in this part of the world, that the whole of this system, the particulars of which I have only begun to develope, was the mere creature of imagination, there would surely have been more wisdom in saying less on a subject concerning which nothing can be known. And supposing *Moses* to have written without any inspiration, his system has this to recommend it, that, besides being very concise, it is not, like this, built on arbitrary and fanciful suppositions. It represents the *Supreme Being* producing all things, not from his own substance, but from nothing, with as much ease as if it had been effected by a mere word of command; and this exertion of power was immediately from himself, without the previous substitution of any other beings, or dividing himself into three, or any number of parts for the purpose of creating or governing the world, and superintending all the changes that take place in it. If, as *M. Langles* says, there be *sublimity* in the *Hindoo* system, there must be more of it in that of *Moses*, because it is equally great in the effect, and far more simple in the cause and the operation. It exhibits one great object of our regard, and not a multiplicity of them, in which the idea of the sublime is lost by the division. They who suppose it necessary or convenient for the Supreme Being to employ inferior agents in the works of creation and providence, must have a less exalted idea of him than they who believe that without any thing like fatigue, or occasion for repose, he himself originally formed, and constantly conducts the whole.

The *Hindoos*, however, conceive that there is more of dignity in the Supreme Being doing nothing himself, but rather employing inferior agents. The Bramins of *Malabar* told Mr. Lord, that “as great persons do not their work but by deputies, so neither was it fit God should be servile to the creatures, but give them their being by his instruments.”* But if a great prince could with perfect ease, and without the least fatigue, do all the business of a great empire himself, it would certainly give us a higher idea of his power and capacity; and if the work had great utility for its object, that conduct would not suggest the idea of mean-

* *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, p. 35.

ness, but of the greatest benevolence. They are little minds who reason like these Bramins.

In the *Institutes of Menu*, we have the following sublime idea (if such language must be applied to extreme absurdity) of the successive revolutions in the system of things: "He whose powers are incomprehensible, having thus created both me and this universe, was again absorbed in the Supreme Spirit, changing *the time of energy for the time of repose*. When that power awakes,—then has this world its full expansion; but when he slumbers with a tranquil spirit, then the whole system fades away. For, while he reposes *as it were* in calm sleep, embodied spirits, endued with principles of action, depart from their several acts, and the mind itself becomes inert. And when they once are absorbed in that supreme essence, then the Divine Soul of all beings withdraws his energy and placidly slumbers.—Thus that immutable power, by waking and reposing alternately, revivifies and destroys, in eternal succession, this whole assemblage of locomotive and immoveable creatures."*

That we may form some idea of the *time* that intervenes between these alternate creations and dissolutions of all things, we have, from the same authority, an account of the division of time as it respects different orders of beings. "A month of *mortals* is a day and a night of the *Pitris*, or *patriarchs inhabiting the moon*.—A year of *mortals* is a day and a night of the gods, or *regents of the universe seated round the north pole*.—Twelve thousand divine years is called the age of the gods, and by reckoning a thousand such divine ages a day of *BRAHMA* may be known: his night has also an equal duration.—At the close of his night, having long reposed, he awakes, and awaking, exerts intellect, *or reproduces the great principle of animation*.—Intellect called into action by his will to create worlds, performs *again* the work of creation.—The age of the gods, or twelve thousand of *their* years, being multiplied by seventy-one, constitutes—a *Menwantara*, or the reign of a *MENU*. There are numberless *Menwantaras*; creations also, and destructions of worlds, innumerable. The being supremely exalted performs all this as if in sport again and again, for the sake of conferring happiness."†

According to Mr. Dow, the *Bedang* teaches that when

* *Instit.* pp. 7, 8. (P.) Ch. i. 51—57; *Jones*, VII. pp. 99, 100.

† *Instit.* pp. 9, &c. (P.) Ch. i. 66, 67, 71, 72, 74, 75, 79, 80; *Jones*, VII. pp. 102—104.

“ the four jugs shall have revolved, then Rudder, with the ten spirits of dissolution, shall roll a comet under the moon, that shall involve all things in fire, and reduce the world into ashes. God shall then exist alone, for matter will be totally annihilated.”* “ The author of the *Neadirsen*,” he says “ maintains that the world is subject to successive dissolutions and renovations at certain stated periods. He divides these dissolutions into the lesser and the greater. The lesser dissolution will happen at the end of a revolution of the jugs. The world will be then consumed by fire, and the elements shall be jumbled together ; and after a certain space of time they will again resume their former order. When a thousand of those smaller dissolutions shall have happened, a MAHPERLEY, or great dissolution, will take place. All the elements will then be reduced to their original *Purmans*, or atoms, in which state they shall long remain. God will then, from his mere goodness and pleasure, restore *Bishesh*, or plasticity. A new creation will arise, and thus things have revolved in succession, from the beginning, and will continue to do so to eternity.”†

If we ask for some authority for this wonderful scheme, the learned *Bramins* are entirely silent. It is a scheme of mere fancy. But overlooking this objection, there is certainly more of dignity and the true sublime in the doctrine of the Scriptures, which represent the Divine Being as *never slumbering or sleeping* ; that the work of creation, whether it had a beginning, or was, like its author, from all eternity, is for ever progressive ; continually advancing from imperfect to perfect, and that the object of the whole is not the sport of the Creator, but the happiness of the universe.

That different accounts of so complex and fanciful a system as that of the *Hindoos* should be given by different Bramins will not be thought extraordinary, and therefore the veracity of travellers, who had no apparent motive to falsify, and yet give different representations of it, is not hastily to be called in question.

According to Mr. Lord, the first human pair had four sons, each destined to a different profession ; but their wives had a separate creation, each of the sons being ordered to proceed in a different direction, where they met with them, and then returned to their parents.‡ After this their posterity becoming very wicked, the Supreme Being destroyed them by

* *Hindustan*, I. (*Pref.*) p. xlv. (P.)

† *Ibid.* pp. lxxv. lxxvi. (P.)

‡ *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, pp. 4—31.

an universal deluge.* After this, there issued from the two sides of Brahma, who experienced all the pains of parturition, "two twins, man and woman, in full growth and perfect stature; the man was named *Manou*, and the woman, *Ceteroupa*, who brought forth three sons and three daughters;" and from them the world was peopled anew.† Here are evident traces of *Noah* and his three sons.

The *Hindoo* account of the creation is not more fanciful than other articles of their philosophy. From them it is probable that the *Western* nations derived their idea of *two principles in man*, and even that of a division of the intellectual principle into two parts. This doctrine, and that of the relation of those principles to the great soul of the universe, is contained in the following passage of the *Institutes of Menu*: "That substance which gives a power of motion to the body, the wise call *eshétrajnga*, or *jévátman*, the vital spirit; and that body which thence derives active functions they name *bhútátman*, or *composed of elements*. Another internal spirit, called *Mahat*, or *the great soul*, attends the birth of all creatures embodied, and thence in all mortal forms is conveyed a perception either pleasing or painful. Those two, the vital spirit and reasonable soul, are closely united with the *five* elements, but connected with the Supreme Spirit, or divine essence, which pervades all beings, high and low. From the substance of that *Supreme Spirit* are diffused, *like sparks from fire*, innumerable vital spirits, which perpetually give motion to creatures exalted and base."‡

The great superiority of the spiritual to the corporeal part of man is the fundamental doctrine of the *Hindoo* system; and hence the satisfaction the Hindoos always express on the separation of them. The contempt for the body is strongly expressed in the following passage of the *Institutes*: "A mansion with bones, for its rafters and beams; with nerves and tendons, for cords; with muscles and blood,

* "Thus every day presenting new platforms of wickedness, and sins that made a noise, God grew angry, and the heavens were clothed with blackness and terror, the seas began to swell, as if they meant to join with the clouds in man's destruction, great noise was heard aloft, such as useth to dismay mortal wretches, and thunder and lightening flashed from the poles, such as seemed to threaten a final wrack to the earth; but as if the world needed cleansing of his defilement and pollution, there came a flood, that covered all nations, in the depths. Thus the bodies had their judgment, but the souls were lodged in the bosom of the Almighty, and so concluded the first age of the world, according to the tradition of the Banians." *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, pp 33, 34.

† *Ibid.* p. 38.

‡ *Instit.* p. 346. P. Ch. xii. 12—15; *Jones*, VIII. p. 131.

for mortar ; with skin, for its outward covering ; filled with no sweet perfume, but loaded with feces and urine ; a mansion infested by age and by sorrow, the seat of malady, harassed with pains, haunted with the quality of darkness, and incapable of standing long ; such a mansion of the vital soul let its occupier always cheerfully quit.”*

The followers of *Fo* also regard the body with great contempt, and neglect the preservation of it. They therefore often kill themselves. The people of Siam think suicide an advantage to the soul, and often hang themselves on a tree called *Ton-po*.†

From the *Indian* philosophy it is probable that the *Manicheans* had their idea of an original difference in souls, some being necessarily good, and others bad. For this is clearly expressed in the following passage of the *Institutes of Menu* : “ In whatever occupation the Supreme Lord first employed any vital soul, to that occupation the same soul attaches itself spontaneously, when it receives a new body, again and again. Whatever quality, noxious or innocent, harsh or mild, unjust or just, false or true, he conferred on any being at its creation, the same quality enters it of course on its future births.”‡

That all nature is animated, and that the souls which animate the lowest forms of things are capable of rising to the highest state, is asserted in this work. “*Souls that animate* worms and insects, serpents, moths, beasts, birds and vegetables, attain heaven by the power of devotion.”§

The Hindoo philosophy of the physical or corporeal world is not more rational than that of the intellectual. According to the *Vedas*, the moon is much higher than the sun.|| According to M. *Bernier*, the *Vedas* teach that a certain *dewtah*, a kind of corporeal divinity, seizes on the sun at the time of an eclipse ; that the sun, though himself a *dewtah*, is then in great pain and anguish, and that prayers, bathing

* *Instit.* p. 155. (P.) Ch. vi. 26, 27 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 287.

† *L'Ezour-Védam*, II. p. 40, *Note.* (P.) “ Les sectateurs de la doctrine Indienne de Foë regardent le corps humain comme un amas de bone et négligent en conséquence sa conservation ; aussi ils se tuent à milliers. (*Du Halde*, III. 52.) Les Siamois pensent que le suicide est un sacrifice utile à l'ame, et qui lui acquiert un grand degré de vertu et de bonheur. Suivant cette idée, ils se pendent quelque fois par dévotion à un arbre appelé *Ton-pô*. (*La Loubere*, I. 487, 488.)” *Ibid.*

‡ *Instit.* p. 5. (P.) Ch. i. 28, 29 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 96.

§ *Instit.* p. 340. (P.) Ch. xi. 241 ; *Jones*, VIII. p. 124.

|| *L'Ezour-Védam*, I. p. 260, *Note.* (P.) “ On lit dans le *Bagavadam* que le ciel de la lune est à 100,000 *Yossineis* au-dessus du soleil. De pareilles erreurs se trouvent dans le *Védam*. Les astronomes convaincus de leur absurdité, par le calcul des éclipses, sont fort embarrassés pour sauver l'honneur de leurs livres sacrés.” *Ibid.*

and alms, are the means of effecting his deliverance. Alms given at that time, they say, are worth a hundred times as much as if they were given at any other. Accordingly, he saw a river crowded with people of all ranks, bathing at the time of an eclipse, and throwing water towards the sun.*

The *Hindoos* say that the general system consists of "fourteen *Bhooboons*, or spheres, seven below, and six above the earth. The seven inferior worlds are said to be altogether inhabited by an infinite variety of serpents, described in every monstrous figure that the imagination can suggest. —The earth is called *Bhoor*, and mankind who inhabit it *Bhoor-logue*. —The spheres gradually ascending from thence are, 1st, *BOBUR*, whose inhabitants are called the *Bobur-logue*. Those of the 2d, the *Swergeh-logue*. 3d, The *Mahurr-logue*. 4th, The *Junneh-logue*. 5th, The *Tuppeh-logue*. 6th, The *Suttee-logue*.

"The *Bobur* is the immediate vault of the visible heavens, in which the sun, moon and stars are placed. The *Swergeh* is the first Paradise, and general receptacle for those who merit a removal from the lower earth. The *Mahurr-logue* are the Fakeers, and such persons as by the dint of prayer have acquired an extraordinary degree of sanctity. The *Junneh-logue*, are also the souls of pious and moral men; and beyond this sphere they are not supposed to pass without some uncommon merits and qualifications. The sphere of *Tuppeh* is the reward of those who have all their lives performed some wonderful act of penance and mortification, or who have died martyrs for their religion. The *Suttee*, or highest sphere, is the residence of *Brihma*, and his particular fa-

* *Voyages*, 1723, II. pp. 99, 100. (P.) "Au temps qu'elle (l'éclipse) devoit arriver, je montai sur la terrasse de ma maison (à *Delhi*) qui étoit située sur le bord du *Gemna*; de-là je vis les deux côtes de ce fleuve près d'une lieue de long, couvert de Gentils ou Idolâtres qui étoient dans l'eau jusqu'à la ceinture, regardans attentivement vers le ciel, pour se plonger et se laver dans le moment que l'éclipse commenceroit.

"Ces Idolâtres ne se furent pas plutôt aperçus que le soleil commençoit de s'éclipser, que j'entendis un grand cri qui s'éleva, et que tout d'un coup ils se plongèrent tous dans l'eau je ne sais combien de fois de suite, se tenans après debout dans cette eau, les yeux et les mains élevés vers le soleil, marmottans tous et prians, comme on diroit en grande dévotion, prenaus de temps en temps de l'eau avec les mains, la jettans vers le soleil, s'inclinans la tête profondément, remuans, et tournans les bras et les mains tantôt d'une façon et tantôt d'une autre, et continuans ainsi leurs plongemens, leurs prières et leurs singeries jusqu'à la fin de l'éclipse, que chacun se retira en jettant des pièces d'argent bien avant dans l'eau, et faisant l'aumône aux *Brahmens*, ou gens de loi, qui n'avoient pas manqué de se trouver à cette cérémonie.

"Cette grande fête de l'éclipse fut chommée de la même façon dans l'*Indus*, dans le *Gange*, et dans tous les autres fleuves et talubs ou réservoirs des *Indes*." *Ibid.* pp. 98—101.

voirites, whence they are also called *Brihma-logue*. This is the place of destination for those men who have never uttered a falsehood during their whole lives, and for those women who have voluntarily burned themselves with their husbands.* The different spheres, or worlds, the Hindoos suppose to be connected by a mountain, which they call *Merou*, and of which they relate many wonders.†

In this earth, they say, there are seven continents, or great portions of land called *deeps* or *dwips*, and not so distant but they have some communication. For, according to the *pundits* who compiled the *Gentoo laws*, the “bird Keroor having brought a man from *Shakud Deep*,” which is the sixth in order, “cast him down upon *Jumboo Deep*,” the first in order, or that which the Hindoos inhabit, and the tribe that sprung from him “is called *Deiool*.” “The length and breadth” of the *Jumboo Deep* they make to be “one hundred thousand of *Joojun*,” that of the next “twice as much,” the next in the same duplicate proportion, till we come to the last, which they say is sixty-four times as much.‡

These *deeps*, or continents, they say are surrounded by as many seas, one of which is of milk, another a solution of sugar, and others consisting of other liquors,§ and according to them the water of our sea was once sweet, but having been drunk by *Agesta*, and voided in the form of urine, it became salt.||

We are not to consider all the popular notions of the Hindoos as parts of their religion, and therefore I do not give the following account of the *Amroutan* as such; but it is amusing, as it shews the wonderful powers of their imagination, and the easiness of their faith. The gods and the giants having applied to *Vichnou* for directions to procure the *Amroutan*, (a liquid the drinking of which gives immortality,) he bade them take the mountain *Mondoro*, and taking the serpent *Bachuki* for a cord, to churn the ocean.¶ In attempting this the mountain sunk, on which the god *Vich-*

* *Gentoo Laws* (Halhed's *Pref.*), pp. xliv. xlv. (P.)

† *La Croze*, II. pp. 283, 284. (P.) “Tous ces mondes ont communication les uns avec les autres par le moyen d'une grande montagne, nommée *Maga-merou*, de laquelle leurs livres racontent beaucoup de merveilles.” *Ibid.*

‡ *Gentoo Laws* (*Pref.*), pp. civ. cv. (P.)

§ *La Croze*, II. p. 284. (P.) “Si la multitude et l'étendue de ces mondes est une imagination bien absurde, le nombre et la qualité de leurs mers ne le sont pas moins. Il y en a de lait, de sucre dissous, et d'autres liqueurs.” *Ibid.*

|| *L'Ezour-Védam* (*Obs. Prelim.*), I. p. 26. (P.) “L'eau étoit originellement douce, mais devint ensuite salée et impure, ils en apportent pour raison, qu'*Agesta* l'ayant toute bue, la rendit bientôt après par les urines.” *Ibid.*

¶ “Prenez la montagne appelée *Mondoro* et transportez-la dans le mer. Cette montagne vous servira de mousoir ou moulinet, et le serpent *Bachuki* vous servira

nou transformed himself into a tortoise,* and raised the mountain by getting under it; and there it seems he continued some time. For they say, that the friction given to him by the whirling round of the mountain in the operation of churning made him sleep, while the motion it gave to the ocean is the cause of its flux and reflux, which continues though the churning has long ceased.† The first effect of this operation was the production of a fine horse, after that came two beautiful women, whom *Vichnou* took to himself, and at length came the *Amroutan*. The giants, however, were cheated of their share of it by the gods, and attacked them; but having the disadvantage of being mortal, they were put to flight.‡

Having given this account of the physical system of the Hindoos, I shall add a curious specimen of their *Metaphysics*, and that from the first authority, the *Institutes of Menu*, which abounds with matter not at all more intelligible than this; but my readers must not expect from me any elucidation of it.

“From the supreme soul,” as quoted before, “he drew forth Mind, existing substantially, though unperceived by sense, immaterial; and *before mind, or the reasoning power, he produced* consciousness, the internal monitor, the ruler. And *before them both*, he produced the great principle of the soul, or first expansion of the divine idea, and all vital forms, endued with the three qualities of *goodness, passion, and darkness*; and the *five* perceptions of sense, and the five organs of sensation. Thus, having at once pervaded with emanations from the Supreme Spirit, the minutest portions of six principles, immensely operative, *consciousness and the five perceptions*, he framed all creatures.

“And since the minutest particles of visible nature have a dependence on those *six* emanations from God, the wise have accordingly given the name of *s’aréra* or *depending on six*,—to his *image* or appearance in visible nature. Thence proceed the great elements, endued with peculiar powers, the Mind, with operations infinitely subtil, the unperishable cause of all apparent forms. This *universe*, therefore, is compacted from the minute portions of those seven divine

de corde pour la faire tourner. Faites-la donc rouler avec force, et bientôt vous verrez naître l’amroutan.” *L’Ezour-Védam*, II. p. 53.

* “Symbole de la stabilité.” *Ibid.* p. 55.

† “La montagne roule sur lui comme le moulinet roule dans une cafetière, et en roulant la frotte doucement; ce frottement l’endort, cause le flux et reflux de la mer, qui dure encore, quoique la tortue ne soit plus.” *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 53—69. (P.)

and active principles, *the great soul, or first emanation, consciousness, and five perceptions*; a mutable universe from immutable *ideas*. Among them each succeeding element acquires the quality of the preceding; and in as many degrees as each of them is advanced, with so many properties it is said to be endued.*

We need not look into the writings of *Moses*, or any of the books of the *Old Testament*, for passages to compare with this. They contain nothing of the same kind. All the philosophy of the Scriptures consists of such popular ideas as in common discourse are adopted even by modern philosophers, as, that the earth is at rest, that the sun rises and sets, and that it is the heart of man, or something within him, that feels, thinks, &c. The Scriptures give no idea of a soul that had existed before the body, or that will, or can, subsist and act independently of it. According to *Moses*, God made man of *the dust of the earth*, and afterwards put *breath* or *life* into him; and when he dies he is said to *return to the dust out of which he was formed*. Nothing is there said of other spheres, other worlds, other continents, or other seas; or indeed of any thing that properly falls within the province of philosophy. The Scripture contains a system of pure *religious faith*, teaching us our duty in this life, and our expectations with respect to another, to which we are to be raised at a future period. On every other subject, we are left to our own speculations.

Wild and confused as is the *Hindoo* account of the origin of the universe, it is far preferable to that which was generally adopted by the *Greeks*, whether it was properly their own, or, as it is thought, derived to them from the *Egyptians*, from whom they received the elements at least of their theology and mythology.

According to the *Hindoos*, the world had a creator; but according to the *Greeks* it had none. The matter out of which it arose was from eternity, and all things assumed their present forms in consequence of the operation of the present laws of nature, which also, it was taken for granted, had always been the same, and had no more any author than matter itself, notwithstanding they bear the marks of the most exquisite design. It seems never to have occurred to these *philosophers*, as the authors of this system were called, that such powers as those of gravitation, magnetism, &c., could not have been assumed by matter itself; but must

* *Instit.* pp. 3, 4. (P.) Ch. i. 14—20; *Jones*, VII. pp. 98—99.

have been imparted *ab extra*, and by some being who must have had the skill to adapt them in the wonderful manner in which they are adapted to one another, so that the present system should have been the result of their joint operation.

But admitting these utterly inadmissible things, viz. the self-existence of matter, and of the general laws to which it is now subject, how could such a wonderful and harmonious system as the present arise from these principles? The clearest account of this system is given by *Diodorus Siculus*, and it is briefly as follows: At first the whole mass of matter, out of which the forms of all things were derived, was in a state of *chaos*, and its parts in continual motion, in consequence of which the lighter parts disengaged themselves from the heavier; the particles of fire, of which the sun and other heavenly bodies consisted, taking the highest place, the air the next, and water and earth the lowest. Then the action of the hot sun upon the moist earth produced such a frothy surface as we now see on marshy ground; and by this means were formed the germs of all living creatures; those in which heat prevailed, rising into the air, in the form of birds; while those which had more of an earthly nature, became men, quadrupeds, and reptiles; and those in the constitution of which water prevailed were fishes. But when the earth was thoroughly dried, this production of living creatures ceased, and the races of them were continued in the method of natural generation.

I need not, surely, observe how wretchedly lame and absurd this system is, in all its parts; and yet, as an evidence of its truth and probability, it was alleged that an infinite number of rats are still produced by the heat of the sun in *Egypt*, at the annual inundation of the *Nile*. Thus mankind, instead of improving upon the system of *Moses* by the exercise of their reason on this great subject, wandered farther and farther into the regions of improbability and absurdity; and the wisest of the *Grecian* philosophers, of whose different sects this was the principal object, never acquired more light with respect to it.

How far the *Greeks* in the time of *Homer* and *Hesiod* had lost sight of every thing rational and sublime in religion, we see in their poems. The cosmogony of *Hesiod* is that of the formation of the world without any supreme mind, and therefore does not deserve to be particularly described. These poets were not the authors of the system that we find in their writings. They ascribed nothing to their gods, but

such actions as were generally thought to be agreeable to their natures ; and it is remarkable that neither in Hesiod nor Homer do we find any trace of sentiments so sublime as those of the Hindoos, especially that of a self-existent intelligent principle. Their gods had all perfectly human, and very imperfect, characters, and even *Jupiter*, the chief of them, only excelled in strength ; and was himself, as well as the rest, subject to a *fate*, of which no account is given ; but whatever was thus fated to come to pass, they could not prevent.

These gods take different sides, some that of the *Greeks*, and others that of the *Trojans*. Their passions are as violent, and their language as intemperate, as those of any men. They deceive and circumvent one another, they personally engage in the battles that were fought, and one of them, a female, is wounded.

Such, however, was the popular religion of the *Greeks* and *Romans* ; and how could it contribute to elevate the mind, or purify the morals ? And yet in the course of many ages they never acquired any better principles ; and at length it was the preaching of a carpenter and fishermen, and not the instruction of philosophers, that overthrew this monstrous and long-established system.

SECTION VI.

Of the Hindoo Polytheism and Idolatry.

M. *Langles* says “ we must take care not to charge the *Hindoos* with *polytheism*.”* Mr. *Holwell* also severely censures “ modern writers” for representing them “ as a race of stupid and gross *idolaters*.”† He is “ amazed that we should so readily believe the people of *Indostan* a race of stupid idolaters.”‡ Mr. *Dow* gives the same favourable idea of the Hindoo worship. “ Let us rest assured,” he says, “ that whatever the external ceremonies of religion may be, the self-same infinite Being is the object of universal adoration.”§

But on whatever principles this is advanced, it will exculpate all the Heathen world, in all ages, from the same charge. It is true that the Hindoos acknowledge one Supreme Being,

* *Discours Prélim.* p. 147. (P.)

† *Interesting Historical Events*, Part i. p. 6. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 11. (P.)

§ *Hindostan*, I. (Pref.) p. lxxvi.

from whom all power is derived. But they suppose that the immediate government of the world is placed by him in other hands. To these inferior deities their prayers and religious services are naturally addressed ; and this worship is encouraged and enjoined in their sacred books.

Mr. Dow says, the “ veneration for different objects” (as *portions of God*) “ has, no doubt, given rise among the common Indians to an idea of subaltern intelligences ; but the learned Brahmins, with one voice, deny the existence of inferior divinities ; and indeed all their religious books of any antiquity confirm that assertion.”* That any person really conversant with the writings of the *Hindoos* should assert this, will appear not a little extraordinary, after reading the extracts which I shall give from some of their books of unquestionable antiquity and authority. Some Bramins, no doubt, may be unbelievers in the general system, or even *Atheists*. There are such among Christians, and Christian ministers ; but this has nothing to do with the proper *Hindoo* theology in theory or practice.

According to their system, “ from this supreme God were sprung (as it were emanations of his divinity) an infinite number of subaltern deities and genii, of which every part of the visible world was the seat and temple. These intelligences did not barely reside in each part of nature. They directed its operations, it was their organ or instrument of their love or liberality to mankind. Each element was under the guidance of some being peculiar to it.”† These inferior gods being conceived to be of different characters and dispositions, it was natural for their worshippers to adopt different methods of deprecating their anger, and soliciting their favour. Hence have come a great variety of whimsical and absurd rites ; and it had been well if this had been all. But so depraved were the opinions of men, as to the objects of their worship, that rites of the most cruel and dreadful nature have been deemed necessary to gain their favour, while others of them have been supposed to be gratified by rites of the most impure kind. That this was the case with the *Egyptians*, all the ancient inhabitants of *Palestine*, the *Chaldeans*, the *Greeks*, and the *Romans*, cannot be denied ; and it is no less the case with the *Hindoos*, not only according to the accounts of travellers, but their own sacred books ; and the number of their gods exceeds that of any other people that we are acquainted with.

* *Hindustan*, I. (*Pref.*) p. lxix.

† Mallett's *North. Antiq.* I. p. 79. (*P.*)

The veneration of the Hindoos for the images of their gods makes them chargeable with *idolatry*, as well as with *polytheism*, if there be any such thing in the world. Their learned Bramins indeed say, that they do not worship the visible idol, but the invisible being represented by it. The same is said by persons of intelligence in every country. But if the common people thought so, they might soon be brought to worship an invisible and omnipresent Being without an image, which bears no resemblance to him, and with which he is no more present than with any thing else. That the mere wood or stone, of which the image consists, has any extraordinary power, was never supposed by any idolater; but they imagine that, after some form of consecration, the powers of the being to whom it is dedicated are brought into it, and then they pay it the same respect as if the superior being himself, in any other form, was before them.

Sir William Jones says, "it seems a well-founded opinion that the whole crowd of gods and goddesses in ancient *Rome*, and modern *Várânes*, mean only the powers of nature, and principally those of the SUN, expressed in a variety of ways, and a multitude of fanciful names."* But it is of no consequence whatever what has been the theoretical origin of the Heathen worship. Those different powers, or the same power under different names, have actually become, in the ideas of the worshippers, so many different persons, to whom they ascribe different attributes. They address them in different ways, and attend upon them with different rites; so that to every real purpose they are to them quite different gods.

Besides the families of the first gods, says *La Croze*, which are sufficiently numerous, the *Hindoos* have a prodigious number of inferior divinities, many millions in all.† They pray, says Mr. Lord, to different deities, according to their different occasions.‡ "They, therefore, that would be happy in marriage, invoke *Hurmout*; they that are to begin the works of architecture, *Gunnez*; they that want health, *Vegenaut*; the soldier in his assault, in feats of arms, cries *Bimohem*; the miserable invoke *Syer*; and they that are in

* *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 55. (P.)

† *Histoire*, II. p. 281. (P.) "Outre la famille de ces premiers dieux, qui est assez nombreuse, ces Indiens ont un nombre prodigieux de divinités inférieures, dont il est impossible qu'ils sçachent les noms, puisqu'ils les font monter a trois cent trente millions." *Ibid.*

‡ Mr. Lord's words are, "another portion of their worship they bestow in invocation of saints, to whom they attribute the powers of giving success to several affairs." *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, p. 60.

prosperity, give their orisons to *Mycasser*.”* If this be not *polytheism*, I do not know what is so.

It has been said that the *Hindoos* conceive all the parts of nature to be animated, even rocks and stones. It has been no uncommon thing for particular stones to be thought to conceal divinities; and on this idea they have become objects of worship. The principal deity of the ancient Arabs, called *Dysares*, was a black stone, square, but not regular, four feet high and two feet broad.† The *Hindoos*, says *Tavernier*, “commonly have in their *pagodas* a round stone, brought from the *Ganges*, which they worship as a god; and one of their *castes* commonly wear small round stones about their necks, and which they put to their breasts when they pray.”‡ Also, “rocks and mountains are the objects of veneration among the Lama’s votaries.”§ *Pietro della Valle* says, that the idol called *Mahadeu*, is a pillar of stone, thicker below than at the top. In another temple which he visited “the idols were two stones, somewhat long, like two small *termini*, or landmarks, painted with their wonted colour. All which idols,” he says, “are served, adored, perfumed, offered to, and washed every day, as for delight (for the Indians account it delight to wash often) by the *Brachmans*, who assist at their service with much diligence.”||

“The *Chingulas* of *Ceylon*, worship a tree called *Bogahah*, in the form of which, they believe that *Budda* was manifested.”¶ Under this tree they light lamps, and place images.**

Notwithstanding the general opinion that *Brahma*, *Vichnou*, and *Sieb*, had the same origin, and bear the same relation to the *Supreme Being*, some of the *Hindoos* attach themselves to one and others to another of them,†† and the generality only worship one of the three.‡‡ They even say

* *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, p. 60.

† Jablonski’s *Pantheon Ægyptiorum*, 1750. (P.)

‡ *Voyages*, II. p. 416. (P.) “Ils tiennent ordinairement dans leurs *pagodes* un caillou en ovale qu’ils apportent du *Gange*, and qu’ils adorent comme dieu.—Il y a une *caste* qui est si superstitieuse sur cet article, que ceux qui en sont tiennent de ces pierres ovales pendues à leur cou, et s’en donnent contre l’estomac tandis qu’ils font leur prière.” *Ibid*.

§ *Sketches*, II. p. 187. (P.) || *Travels*, 1665, pp. 52, 59. (P.)

¶ *L’Ezour-Védam*, II. p. 47, Note. (P.) “Les *Chingulais* de l’Isle de *Ceylon* rendent un culte à l’arbre appelé *Bogahah*, sous la forme duquel ils croient que *Budda* s’est manifesté.” *Ibid*.

** Delaport’s *Voyages*, III. p. 395. (P.)

†† A particular history of seven of the Hindoo sects may be seen in Phillips’s *Account of Malabar*, pp. 34—36. (P.)

‡‡ *Sonnerat*, I. p. 151. (P.) “Le commun des Indiens n’adore qu’une seule

that these divine personages “ quarrelled and fought, that during the battle the earth trembled, and the stars fell from the firmament.”* The worshippers of *Vichnou* and those of *Sieb*, or *Isuren*, joined, and massacred those of *Birmah*.† Nay the worshippers of *Chiven*, which is another name for *Sieb*, acknowledge no other god, and consider *Birmah* and *Vichnou* as creatures compared to him. They have even such a contempt for him, that they bathe and purify themselves after hearing the name of *Vichnou*.‡ Others, however, think that *Chiven* and *Vichnou* are only different attributes of the same god. It is *Chiven* that is worshipped under the form of *lingam*, and *Vichnou* “ is the only god to whom they offer bloody sacrifices. His victims are cocks and kids.”§

M. *Sonnerat* says that, besides those whom they place in the rank of gods, they have *saints*, “ whose pictures they place in their temples, and that they address prayers to them after they have worshipped God.”|| The Lama of Tibet told Mr. Bogle “ that he worshipped three of the Hindoo gods,—but not any of the inferior deities.”¶

These it will be said, are the accounts of travellers. But in the sacred books of the *Hindoos*, mention is made of various divinities besides the Supreme Being. The worship of the sun, says Sir William Jones, is principally recommended in the *Vedas*.**

The *Institutes of Menu* say “ The Supreme Ruler created an assemblage of inferior Deities, with divine attributes, and pure souls; and a number of Genii exquisitely delicate.”†† In this work mention is made of “ such orders of demigods as are wafted in airy cars, genii of the signs and lunar mansions, and *Daityas*, or the offspring of *DITI*.”‡‡

de ces trois divinités; mais quelques savans, adressent encore leurs prières aux trois réunies; on en trouve la représentation dans plusieurs pagodes sous des figures humaines à trois têtes.” *Ibid.* See Plate 31. “Trinourti ou Trinité des Indiens.” *Ibid.*

* *Sonnerat*, p. 152. (P.) “ Il y eut un combat terrible entre eux; les astres tombèrent du firmament—et la terre trembla.” *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* p. 197. (P.) “ Poussées par leurs prêtres, se ligèrent les unes contre les autres, et se firent une cruelle guerre, dans laquelle celle de *Brouma* fut entièrement détruite.” *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* p. 198. (P.) “ Un sectateur de *Chiven* qui entend prononcer le nom de *Vichenou*, court aussi-tôt se purifier dans le bain.” *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.* p. 157. (P.) “ De tous les dieux, il est le seul à qui l’on offre des sacrifices sanglans; on lui sacrifie des coqs et des cabrits.” *Ibid.*

|| *Ibid.* p. 188. (P.) “ Quant aux saints qui, par leurs vertus, ont obtenu le paradis, et dont la quantité est innombrable, ils placent les tableaux de quelques-uns dans les temples et leur adressent des prières après avoir adoré Dieu.” *Ibid.*

¶ *Sketches*, II. p. 209. (P.) ** *Dissert. on Asia*. (P.)

†† *Instit.* p. 4. (P.) Ch. i. 22; *Jones*, VII. p. 95.

‡‡ *Instit.* p. 351. (P.) Ch. xii. 48; *Jones*, VIII. p. 137.

The worship paid to the *manes*, or ancestors, is a great article in the system, and is mentioned in almost every page of the *Institutes*. Of them it is said, that “the divine manes are always pleased with an oblation in empty glades, naturally clean, on the banks of rivers, and in solitary spots.”* Even penances are said to “have been performed by deities” as well as by holy sages,† and that “by the deities themselves have oaths been taken for the purpose of judicial proof.”‡ And exactly as was practised by the Heathens in the western world, “the magistrate,” it is directed in the code of *Gentoo laws*, “whatever province he shall conquer, shall pay worship to the *Devtaḥ* of that country, and shall give much effects and money to the *Bramins* of that province.”§

A number of *Hindoo* deities are mentioned in the following directions given to the Bramins in the *Institutes of Menu*. “In his domestic fire for dressing the food of all the Gods, after the prescribed ceremony, let a *Brahmin* make an oblation each day to these *following* divinities: First to AGNI, God of Fire, and to the Lunar God, severally; then to both of them at once; next to the assembled Gods, and afterwards to DHANWANTARI, God of Medicine; to CUHU', goddess of the day, when the new moon is discernible; to ANUMATI, goddess of the day after the opposition; to PRAJAPATI, or the Lord of Creatures; to DYĀVA and PRITHIVI', goddesses of sky and earth; and lastly to the fire of the good sacrifice. Having thus, with fixed attention, offered clarified butter in all quarters, proceeding *from the East* in a Southern direction, to INDRA, YAMA, VARUNA, and the God SO'MA, let him offer his gift to animated creatures; *saying*, ‘I salute the *Maruts*,’ or *winds*. Let him throw dressed rice near the door; *saying*, ‘I salute the water gods,’ in water; and on his pestle and mortar, *saying*, ‘I salute the gods of large trees.’ Let him do the like *in the North East*, or near his pillow, to SRI', the goddess of abundance; *in the South West*, or at the foot of his bed, to the propitious goddess BHADRACĀLI'; in the centre of his mansion, to BRAHMA', and his household god. To all the Gods assembled, let him throw up his oblation in open air; by day, to the spirits who walk in light; and by night to those who walk in darkness.”||

* *Instit.* p. 78. (P.) Ch. iii. 20; *Jones*, VII. pp. 187, 188.

† *Instit.* p. 336. (P.) Ch. xi. 21; *Jones*, VIII. p. 119.

‡ *Instit.* p. 204. (P.) Ch. viii. 110; *Jones*, VII. p. 348.

§ *Pref.* p. cxv. (P.)

|| *Instit.* VII. p. 62. (P.) Ch. iii. 84—90; *Jones*, VII. pp. 84, 85.

All the neighbouring nations, whose religions have some affinity to that of the *Hindoos*, are polytheists. The *Siamese* say that the reign of a deity is limited to a certain number of years, after which he sinks into eternal repose, and another succeeds him in the government of the universe. *Sommonokodom*, they say, was the last of them.* “The people of *China*,” Sir William Jones says, “had an ancient system of ceremonies and superstitions, which the government and the philosophers appear to have encouraged, and which has an apparent affinity with some parts of the oldest *Indian* worship: they believe in the agency of genii, or tutelary spirits, presiding over the stars and the clouds,” and “over all the elements, (of which, like the *Hindus*, they reckon *five*,) and particularly over *fire*, the most brilliant of them; to those deities they offered victims in high places.”† If this be not a system of *polytheism*, leading to every evil arising from polytheism elsewhere, I do not know how to define the word.

In this respect it will hardly be pretended that the *Hebrew* institutions were copied from those of the *Hindoos* or the *Egyptians*. That there is but one God, the maker and governor of all things, and without any visible representation, the sole object of worship, is the great principle of the Hebrew religion; and in all the writings of *Moses* it is held out as directly opposed to the *polytheism* and *idolatry* of all the neighbouring nations. The greatest stress imaginable is laid on this article, and the Hebrew nation was evidently set apart by the Divine Being to be the great medium of his communications with mankind, and to bear their testimony against the universally prevailing corruption of true religion, which was then taking place; and it is evident from fact that nothing but such a supernatural interposition as that which *Moses* relates could have prevented that one nation from being contaminated with it.

The natural proneness of the *Israelites* to *polytheism* and *idolatry* appears in the most undeniable manner from the whole of their history. Their ancestors were idolaters before their coming into *Canaan*, that part of the same family which remained in *Mesopotamia* continued to be so. The posterity of *Jacob* were so in *Egypt*, and their predilection for that system we see in the Wilderness, and from the time of their settlement in the land of *Canaan* to the *Babylonish* Captivity. Though, in consequence of several interpositions

* *Relation of Jesuits*, p. 238. (P.)

† *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 128. (P.)

of divine power, they were occasionally recovered from it, they relapsed again and again. What was it, then, what *could* it have been, that effected a radical cure of that propensity, but some measure of the same kind that had from time to time given a check to it? Certainly it could not have been their own reason, or natural inclination, but a power which they could not controul. And it has been by means of this one despised nation, (for Jesus, the founder of the Christian religion, was of it,) that the knowledge of the one true God has been preserved and propagated in the world to this very day. All nations that have not been, directly or indirectly, instructed by them are at this day idolators. It is to revelation only, and not to any exertion of human reason, that we are indebted for such great and important light. This has been the only radical cure of this miserable superstition, by which the world has been so long enslaved, and from which have flowed the greatest calamities.

There is something so great and sublime in the idea of *one mind* comprehending and governing this world, and much more the whole universe, that we cannot wonder that it was not long retained even by those who had originally received it by tradition from preceding revelations, after divine communications had been long discontinued. Much less can we wonder that men should never have discovered this great truth themselves, or have recovered it after it had been lost.

That there is one God, the original author of all things, was retained in the *East*, and especially by the *Hindoos*; but they thought there were many inferior deities presiding over different parts of the system. And when these inferior deities were considered as emanations from the great Source of all being, we the less wonder at their becoming objects of adoration. The precept of *Ormuzd*, in some extracts from the *Zendavesta*, is, "Adore all that I have created, for it is the same as if ye adored me."* This authorizes the worship even of the inanimate parts of nature.

The ancient religion of the *Northern* European nations was, in several respects, similar to that of the *East*; and there we find the acknowledgment of one Supreme God, with the worship of several inferior ones. "Three deities," (*Odin*, the god of war, *Freya*, his wife, and *Thor*, the god of thunder,) "were the principal objects of the worship and

* *Annual Register*, (1762,) V. p. 119. (P.)

reverence of all the Scandinavians.—The Danes seem to have paid the highest honours to Odin. The inhabitants of Norway and Iceland appear to have been under the immediate protection of Thor: and the Swedes had chosen for their tutelary deity, Freya;—who, according to the *Edda*, presided over the seasons of the year, and bestowed peace, fertility and riches.”*

Among all the *reasons* for polytheism, the most curious that I have met with is the following of one of the speakers of *Plutarch*, in his treatise *on the Cessation of Oracles*: “There being no such thing in nature,” he says, “as one man alone, one horse, one star, one *god*, one *dæmon*; so there is not in nature only one world.”†

In favour of *polytheism*, it is often said to be mild and tolerant in its nature. The Heathens, in general, believing that every nation and district had its peculiar gods and modes of worship, did not molest them in it; and when they were in any foreign country they did not scruple to conform to the religion of it. But they allowed no foreign religions at home. In *Greece*, as well as at *Rome*, there were very severe laws on this subject, and any contempt expressed for the public religion was deemed unpardonable, as appeared in the case of *Alcibiades*.‡ It was in consequence of these ancient laws that the Christians were persecuted by the early *Roman* emperors; while the *Jews*, being a foreign people, were allowed the profession of their own religion.

The *Egyptians* were much divided among themselves on the subject of religion, and the effects of their mutual animosity were sometimes unpleasant. *Herodotus* says, the people of Thebes abstain from sheep, and sacrifice goats, whereas the inhabitants of the Mendesian nome abstain from goats, and sacrifice sheep.§ *Plutarch*, in his treatise *De Iside et Osiride*, says, “the *Lycopolitans* are the only people in Egypt who eat sheep, because the wolf, which they worship, does so; and in our times, the *Oxyrynchites*, (or those of the city in which the pike is worshipped,) because the *Cynopolitans* (or the inhabitants of a city in which the dog is worshipped) ate that species of fish, caught the dogs, and killed them, and even ate of them, as at a sacrifice. Thence arose a civil war, in which they did much mischief to one

* Mallett's *North. Antig.* I. p. 97. (P.)

† *Morals*, IV. p. 31.

‡ Who was accused of defacing the statues of the gods and mimicking the sacred mysteries. See *Plutarch* in *Alcib.*

§ *Euterpe* (L. ii.), xlii. (P.)

another, till they were chastised by the Romans.* He says, "the greater part of the Egyptians worshipping the animals themselves, have not only made their religious worship a subject of scorn and derision, but while this practice makes some persons extravagantly superstitious, it drives others to Atheism."†

According to the same author, there was much bigotry among the *Persians*. "The *Magi*," he says, "descended from *Zoroaster*, adored the hedgehog above other creatures, but had a deadly spite against water rats, and thought that man was dear to the gods who destroyed the most of them."‡

Like the ancient *Egyptians*, the *Hindoos*, we have seen, quarrel with one another on account of their attachment to their different deities, especially in *Malabar*. "The worshippers of *Vichnou*, and of *Isuren*," says *La Croze*, "condemn one another, and use different forms of prayer, which have no relation to one another."§

Mild as the religion of the *Hindoos* appears to be, and gentle as are their general manners, they can assume a very different character when their religion is concerned. It has been seen that the Bramins exterminated the *Sammanians*, and the followers of *Buddha*, with fire and sword, leaving none of them on the West side of the *Ganges*. They "are called *Atheists*, by the *Bráhmans*."|| They consider all those who blaspheme the divinity (by which they, no doubt, mean their own religion) as monsters, to be avoided with the utmost care, and say, that the king ought to exterminate them.¶ And when any *Hindoo* is converted to Christianity, he is not only banished from his tribe, but abandoned to the insults of the whole nation.

Similar to this was the treatment of those who were excommunicated by the *Druids*. They were not only excluded from the sacrifices, but deprived of the benefit of the laws. They were incapable of any employment, and their society was avoided by all persons. In what light the *Gauls*

* *Morals*, IV. p. 154.

† *Ibid.* p. 152.

‡ *Symposiacs*, L. iv. Q. 5. (P.) *Morals*, III. Pt. viii. pp. 197, 198.

§ *Histoire*, II. p. 256. (P.) "Ces gens-là se damnent les uns les autres, et se servent de livres et de formules de prières qui n'ont aucun rapport entre elles." *Ibid.*

|| *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 265. (P.)

¶ *L'Ézour-Védam*, I. p. 274. (P.) "Celui qui blasphème la Divinité, est un monstre qu'il faut éviter avec soin, et qu'on doit exclure du commerce des hommes.—On doit s'écrier—s'il y avoit un roi dans le pays, tu ne l'échapperois pas." *Ibid.*

and *Britons* considered persons of other nations, and other religions, is not said.

The *Hindoos* regard all Christians with the greatest abhorrence and detestation, as much below the lowest of their own castes. *M. Sonnerat* says, "Nothing can reconcile the *Hindoos* to the European customs, and their hatred only increases by living with them. Some merchants only, more from interest than inclination, shew less aversion to strangers; but the *Bramins*, the penitents, and many others, have an invincible horror for every thing that resembles the customs of Europeans."*

According to some well-informed travellers, the temper of the *Bramins* in general is by no means amiable. They can be cruel and malignant where their religion is concerned. But I do not lay much stress on any thing not authorized by their institutions, since there may be bad men who profess the best religion. Of this we see examples enow among Christians. When the *Hindoos* converse with *Christians* on the subject of religion, they profess to believe that the Supreme Being is equally pleased with all religions, and intended that all the different modes of it should be adopted by different nations.

It has been seen that all the *Hindoos* are by no means agreed on the subject of religion, and there are unbelievers among them as well as among the ancient Heathens. *La Croze* says, there are Atheists in India, and treatises in defence of Atheism.† In a tract translated "from the Sanscrit," mention is made of "six atheistical systems of philosophy."‡ Mr. Dow says, "the Boad, or Atheists," are the "common enemies of every system of religion."§ And the *Malabarians*, writing to the Danish missionary, say, "there are men among us that live as brutes, having no sense of religion at all."||

* *Voyages*, I. p. 194. (P.) "Rien ne peut les familiariser avec leur usages, et leur haine en vivant parmi eux ne fait qu'augmenter: quelques marchands seulement, plus par intérêt que par inclination, montrent moins d'éloignement pour les étrangers; mais les Brame, les penitens et beaucoup d'autres ont une horreur invincible pour tout ce qui se ressent des mœurs de l'Europe." *Ibid.*

† *Histoire*, II. p. 324. (P.) "Les sçavans qui l'ont nié n'en étoient pas bien informés." *Ibid.*

‡ *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 108. (P.) § *Hindustan*, I. (Pref.) p. lxiii. (P.)

|| *Phillips's Account*, p. 151. (P.) The following account given by a *Malabarian*, and not disputed by the *Missionary*, is far more favourable: "There are some among us that keep themselves disengaged from any particular sect whatsoever, and from symbolizing with any set of religious ceremonies and temple worship, contenting themselves to adore, revere, and love, with humble minds and ardent affections, the great Creator of the Universe." *Conferences between Missionaries and Malabarians*, 1719, p. 82.

SECTION VII.

Of the Religion of Egypt.

THERE is no ancient nation from which *Moses* can with so much probability be supposed to have borrowed any of his institutions, civil or religious, as the Egyptians, among whom he was educated, and to whose rites it is evident that the *Israelites* were much attached. I shall, therefore, give a general outline of the religion of Egypt, extracted chiefly from that excellent work of *Jablonski*,* entitled *Pantheon Ægyptiorum*.† This writer has been peculiarly happy in his investigation of this very abstruse and difficult subject, as I think must be the opinion of all persons who will read his work with attention. It is at the same time the most favourable account that has been given of this system; and from his representation of it, and of the changes it underwent, we shall clearly see not only the extreme improbability of *Moses* having derived any lights from it, but also the great importance of revelation; since, without it, the most intelligent of men, left to their own speculations, gave into the greatest absurdities, and such as were connected with cruel and obscene rites, and, consequently, great dissoluteness of manners.

According to *Jablonski*, the knowledge and worship of the Supreme Being was long retained by the *Egyptians*,‡ and they did not think, with the *Stoics* and others, that he was bound by any blind *fate*, independent of his own will. This supreme intelligence was denominated *Neitha*.§ The same, or his principal attribute, was also designated by the terms *Phthas* and *Kneph* (Cnuphis), and in their hieroglyphics he was represented by a serpent.|| They had also an idea of a chaos of inert matter, out of which the Supreme Being formed all things. The origin of all things was also deno-

* *Paul Ernest Jablonski*, a native of Berlin. He died in 1757, aged 64, at Frankfort on the Oder, where he was Professor of Theology.

† “Sive de Diis eorum Commentarius, cum Prolegomenis de Religione et Theologia Ægyptiorum.” 8vo. 3 vols. *Frankof.* 1750.

‡ “Negari non potest, vetustiores gentis illius philosophos, materiæ, et toti rerum naturæ præfecisse mentem infinitam, æternam, ex cujus sapienti consilio, potentique nutu, operationes reliquorum Deorum, quos vulgus adorabat, penderent, mentem, quæ omnia decerneret, omnia ordinaret, omnia gubernaret.” *Pantheon Ægypt.* l. p. 88.

§ See *ibid.* pp. 53—80.

|| *Ibid.* pp. 89, 90.

minated *Athor*, called by the *Greeks* the *celestial Venus*.* It seems to have been all nature or the powers of nature, personified.

In a course of time, however, the worship of the Supreme Being was neglected in *Egypt*, as well as in other parts of the world, and the regards of the people were confined to visible objects, especially the heavenly bodies, as having the most sensible influence on the earth, and on which their well-being more immediately depended; and they worshipped the sun and moon under their proper names; that of the former *Phre*, and that of the latter *Io*. They also paid some worship to the stars, and the five planets. These, together with the sun and moon, were the *seven great gods* of *Egypt*, and when they are called *eight*, the Supreme Being was included with them. These were the *Cabiri*, &c. of the *Greeks*. It is probable that the erection of obelisks and pyramids, with which *Egypt* abounded, had some relation to the worship of the sun, as also had the sacred name consisting of *three letters*. These *Jablonski* supposes to have been *Phre* above-mentioned. But as the celebrated *triliteral name* among the *Hindoos* is *oum*, and *On* was also at one time the name or title of the sun in *Egypt*, (whence we read of the priest of *On*, and a city of that name, called by the *Greeks* *Heliopolis*, sacred to him,) I rather think that *this* was the mystical word in *Egypt*, as well as in *Hindustan*. In time, however, the worship of the stars and planets became confined to the priests, who applied the knowledge they had of them to the purpose of calculating nativities, and other modes of divination.

The next change that the religion of *Egypt* underwent, was in consequence of the speculations of the priests and men of learning, concerning the various positions of the sun and moon with respect to the earth, and the other properties and powers of these great luminaries, and their giving them different names, expressive of those relations and properties. After this, the worship of the sun and moon by their proper names gradually ceased, other terms being introduced, and peculiar rites appropriated to each; so that in time they came to be considered as so many different deities; and it is now with difficulty that they can be traced to their origin. This worship of the *sun* and *moon* under symbolical names,

* "In dubium à nemine vocari poterit, fuisse aliquod vetustioribus Ægypti incolumis Numen, magna veneratione cultum, ab ipsis quidem vocatum *ATHOR*, quod vero Græci—Venerem interpretati sunt." *Pantheon Ægypt.* l. p. 3.

Jablonski thinks, was accomplished in the fourth century after the *Exodus*,* in consequence of a reformation that was then made in the *Egyptian* calendar, which the priests were enabled to do by the attention they had given to the science of astronomy. About that time, in other countries as well as in Egypt, the sun was seldom worshipped under any other names than such as *Osiris*, *Baal*, *Moloch*, *Chemosh*, &c. ; but the term *Osiris* he supposes to have been known in *Egypt* some time before the arrival of the *Israelites* in the country. Under this name the sun was considered as the regulator of time ; and, as king of the heavens, he was called *Remphath*. In the winter solstice, he was *Serapis*, worshipped under that name at *Sinopium* near Memphis, and at *Racotis* near Alexandria. As beginning to emerge from this low state he was *Harpocrates* ; when arrived at the vernal equinox he was *Amun*, and under that name was worshipped at Thebes. In the summer solstice he was *Horus* ; and considered as in his full strength, he was *Semo* and *Hercules*.

About the same time that the sun was worshipped under the name of *Osiris*, the moon obtained that of *Isis* ; and in time was worshipped in preference to any other deity, because the moon was thought to have more influence on the earth than any other of the heavenly bodies. She was thought more beneficent than the sun, whose excessive heat often dried and burned up the fruits of the earth. Sometimes, however, by the term *Isis*, was understood the fruitful part of the land of Egypt, as being made so by the influence of the moon ; and sometimes it was even synonymous to the earth in general.

But the *moon*, as well as the *sun*, was worshipped under more names than one. The new moon was the goddess *Bubastis*, and the full moon *Buti*. Considered as continually changing, and often punishing the crimes of men, she was *Tithrambo*, corresponding to the *Hecate* of the Greeks. She was also *Ilythia*, or *Lucina*, particularly invoked in childbearing. *Sothis*, or the dog-star, was peculiarly sacred to *Isis*, as other stars and planets were sacred to other deities, who were supposed to direct their influences. The *heliacal* rising of this star being when the sun was in cancer, and the rising of the Nile being then first perceptible, this great

* Anno *Per. Jul.* 3389, A. C. 1325, et post exitum Israëlitarum ex Ægypto 320—ab eo tempore, ut opinor, sacerdotes Ægyptii, qui hactenus solem, sub ipso hoc proprio illi nomine (*Phre*) coluerant, novo eum cognomine mactarunt, eumque *tempus*, vel *tempora* efficientem nuncuparunt." *Pantheon Ægypti*. I. p. 156.

event was chiefly ascribed to the moon. This was in the month called *Thoth*, the first in the Egyptian year, and thought to be the birth-day of the world.

The worship of the *Egyptians* was not confined to the celestial bodies. The river *Nile* was an object of worship to them in a very early period, being considered as the father and saviour of the country. Temples were erected to this river, and priests appointed to serve in them, especially at *Nilopolis*; but in every considerable city there were priests of the Nile, and among other offices it was their business to bury in sacred monuments all persons who were killed by crocodiles, or drowned in the river; thinking there was something divine in them. The Nile was sometimes called the earthly *Osiris*, and the bull *Apis* was considered as his symbol, or of the fertility which Egypt derived from it. Before this river entered Egypt it was called *Siris*, which Mr. Bruce says, signifies *a dog* in those countries, and thence the name *Sirius*, or the *dog-star*.

Besides the worship of benevolent deities, the *Egyptians*, like all other Heathen nations, paid divine honours to a malevolent one, commonly called *Typhon*, he being considered as the author of almost all evil, and they worshipped him with a view of averting the evils which they thought it was in his power to inflict upon them. To him they once sacrificed men with red hair, he being, they said, of that colour, (on which account they held it in great abhorrence,) but afterwards red oxen. When they did not gain their object by this means, they took some of the animals that were sacred to him into a dark place, where they terrified and beat them; and if that did not answer, they killed them outright.

But the circumstance that most of all distinguished the *Egyptians* from all other nations, and which drew upon them the ridicule of them all, was their worshipping live animals; the origin of which is very obscure. If it was known to the priests at the time of their intercourse with the *Greeks*, it was communicated only to those who were initiated into their mysteries. The probability is, that they were considered as emblems of divine attributes. These animals were, however, kept in the precincts of their temples, all possible attention was paid to them, and sacrifices and other rites performed, as to the deities themselves, who must, no doubt, have been supposed to animate them.

In common with the *Hindoos*, the *Egyptians* had a greater veneration for *cows* than for any other cattle. The cow was

sacred to *Athor*, called by the *Greeks* the celestial *Venus*, and a live cow was generally kept in her temples.

But in later times much greater homage was paid to three bulls, one called *Mnevis*, at *Heliopolis*, which was said to represent the *sun*; another was *Apis*, at *Memphis*, to represent the *moon*; and the third was called *Onuphis*, the symbol of the *Nile*, at *Hermunthi*. The worship of *Mnevis*, *Jablonski* thinks was prior to the *Exodus*, but it was little attended to after the introduction of *Apis*.

When an *Apis* died, his successor, into whom the same divine spirit was supposed to pass, was known by certain marks, especially the figure of a new moon on his right side. When such a one was found, he was first brought to *Nilopolis*, and kept there forty days; after which he was conducted to his temple at *Memphis*, where other bulls were sacrificed to him, and he was in every other respect treated as a divinity. It was deemed necessary, however, to give particular attention to his food; and lest he should grow too fat by drinking the water of the *Nile*, he was always watered out of a particular fountain. But after a certain time, which is supposed to have been twenty-five years, he was drowned by the priests in a sacred well. If he died before that time, he had the most sumptuous funeral, and all the country shewed signs of the greatest anxiety and distress till another was found.

Sheep, and especially rams, were sacred both to *Neitha*, whose other symbol was a serpent, and to *Amun*, called by the *Greeks* *Jupiter Ammon*, at *Thebes*; and a live ram was kept in his temple. *Mendes*, called *Pan*, by the *Greeks*, was worshipped in the form of a live goat, at a city which went by his name, and no goats were eaten by his worshippers. He was also represented by the *phallus*, and was said to be of both sexes, as were several other of the *Egyptian* deities. The rites of his worship were more abominable than any thing else we read of in all history.

Anubis, the companion of *Osiris* and *Isis*, was worshipped in the form of a dog; and if in any house a dog died, the family went into the deepest mourning. *Jablonski* supposes that *Anubis* represented the horizon; but Mr. Bruce, with more probability, I think, supposes that he was the dog-star. His image was a man with the head of a dog, and it was always either made of solid gold or gilded.

Cats were sacred to *Bubastis*; and at the city which bore the name of this deity, cats were buried with the greatest solemnity. Field mice were the living images of *Buto*, who

had an oracle at a city of that name. Though divine honours were not paid to geese, they were considered as in some measure sacred to *Isis*, and were sacrificed to her.

All the animals above-mentioned were of the useful kind; but they also worshipped others of a mischievous nature, as lions, wolves, apes, crocodiles, the hippopotamus, and serpents, as living images of some of their deities. The crocodile and hippopotamus were sacred to *Typhon*, and so also was the ass. The crocodile was worshipped with many superstitious rites; and when children were devoured by those animals, the parents were taught to consider it as an honour to them, and they did not mourn for them. The hippopotamus was worshipped at *Papremis*.

The *Egyptians* also paid divine honours to several plants as well as to animals, especially to onions and garlick, of which, on this account, they thought it impiety to eat. The lotus was sacred to *Harpocrates*, because it flowered in the winter solstice, to which he bore a relation.

Thus was the knowledge of the one true God, the maker and preserver of all things, lost, and his worship wholly abandoned, in this nation famed for wisdom and the attention they gave to religion, so as to be respected as the fountain of science to the *Greeks* and *Romans*. Now, let any candid person who has read the *Pentateuch* say, whether he has discovered any thing in the institutions of *Moses* that resembles the religious system, or rites, of the *Egyptians*. They are in every respect the reverse of each other. Could *Moses* have borrowed any thing from the *Egyptians*, and not have adopted the worship of any of their numerous deities, or of the living animals which represented them, or any of their impure rites? Numerous as were the superstitious restrictions which the *Egyptians* laid themselves under with respect to food, dress, &c., none of them are recommended by *Moses*; and in the books of the *Old Testament* in general, the religion of Egypt is spoken of with as much detestation as that of the other neighbouring nations, that of the *Canaanites* excepted, with whom human sacrifices prevailed to a greater degree than in any other part of the world.

Though there are, as I have shewn, many points of resemblance between the religion of the ancient *Egyptians* and that of the *Hindoos*, yet, in many respects, they are exceedingly different, so that, though they may have gone together at the first, they must have separated at a very early period. The *Hindoos* never worshipped living animals, which is a principle feature in the religion of the

Egyptians; and the names, the characters, and the images of their deities have very little resemblance to each other. The Hindoos paid no such worship to the sun and moon under the various aspects which they bore to the earth; and their *Brahma*, *Vichnou*, and *Sieb*, have hardly any resemblance of *Osiris*, *Isis*, and *Typhon*, or to *Osiris*, *Orus*, and *Typhon*, except in the number *three*; and the respect which the Hindoos still preserve for the Supreme Being, the author and the end of all things, was entirely lost among the Egyptians.

There is, however, a very remarkable resemblance between the religion and *mythological* fables of the *Greeks* and those of the *Hindoos*, though we are not able to trace any connexion there ever was between them. Among the numerous points of resemblance that Sir William Jones and Colonel Wilford have observed between the system of the Hindoos and that of the western part of the world, very few relate to *Egypt*. The great mass of them relates wholly to *Greece*, or the fables of the Greeks concerning Egypt, and not to the ideas of the Egyptians themselves.*

SECTION VIII.

Of the Religion of the Schamans.

THE religion of the *Hindoos* is far too complex to have been, as Sir William Jones supposes, the oldest system of *polytheism* and idolatry. It is evidently a refinement on something much more simple, and this appears to me to have been the system of the *Samanes*, whom the Greek writers mention as a sect of philosophers in India, opposed

* That my reader may be the better judge of this I shall just bring into one view the several points of resemblance that have with the greatest probability been traced between the *Oriental* and *Western* systems, though most of them have been mentioned before.

Janus is thought to be *Ganesa*; *Saturn*, *Satyavrat*; *Jupiter* or *Diespiter*, *Divespiter*, lord of the sky, is the same with *Indra*. *Osiris* and *Isis* were *Iswara* and *Isi*; *Ceres*, *Sris*; *Dionysos* *Rama*, or (according to Colonel Wilford) *Divu Nahaushta*, in the spoken dialect, *Deonaush*. *Pan*, was *Pavan*; *Apollo*, *Crishna*; *Vulcan* was *Wiswacarma*; *Venus*, *Bhavani*; *Hermes*, or *Mercury*, *Nared*. The *Tauric Diana*, or *Hecate*, was *Cali*; *Mars*, *Carticeya*; *Juno*, *Parvati*; *Minerva*, *Durga*; *Cupid* (according to *Sonnerat*) was *Manmadiu*; *Bacchus*, *Bhagvat*; *Typhon*, *Mahadeva*; *Cepheus*, *Capeja*; *Perseus*, *Parasica*; *Andromeda*, *Antarmala*; *Cassiopea*, *Cosyapa*; and *Simele*, *Syamala*. The *muses* and *nymphs* were the *Gopya* of *Mathuren*, and of *Goverdhan*, the *Parnassus* of the Hindoos. *Prometheus* was *Pramathesa*; *Labdacus*, *Lubdahaca*; *Jocasta*, *Yogacashta*; *Laius* or *Linus*, *Linaser*; *Cadmus*, *Cardom*, and the *Macrobii*, *Marcaba*. How few of these parallels have any relation to Egypt! (P.)

to the *Brachmanes*, and to be the same with those who are now called *Schamans* in Siberia. Indeed, it is natural to look for the oldest customs and the oldest religions among nations the farthest removed from the centre of civilization. As they were probably the first that emigrated, they would, of course, carry with them the notions and the practices that prevailed in the earliest times.

Both the people and the priests of the *Schaman* religion are at present wholly illiterate; but the old *Samanes* are said to have written many books in philosophy and theology,* and they are not the only people who furnish an example of sinking into barbarism from a state of considerable improvement. The *Samanians* being persecuted by the *Bramins*, and driven by them out of India Proper, are thought to have taken refuge in *Pegu*, *Siam*, and other countries beyond the *Ganges*, and it is supposed that the religion of those countries was derived from their principles. "Even the religion of the *Lama*," in *Tibet*, is also said to be "nothing more than a reformed *Schamanism*."†

As the followers of *Budda* were likewise persecuted by the *Bramins*, and they also fled to the other side of the *Ganges*, some are of opinion that he was worshipped there under the appellation of *Sommona-Kodom*. But since "the Tartars call God *Kutai*, *Chutai*, or *Gudai*; the Persians *Khoda*, (which very much resembles our word *God*,) *Sommona-Kodom* may signify "the God of the *Schamans*."‡ As to "the signification of the word *Schaman*,"—M. de la *Loubere* tells us, that it signifies in the *Balian*, or holy language of the *Siamese*, a man living in the woods; a hermit,§ which is applicable enough to one who is addicted to a life of contemplation. The word *Talapoin* is said to have the same signification in the language of some of the neighbouring nations.

In the tenets and practices of the *Schamans* we may see a faint outline of the religion of the *Hindoos*. They believe in one God, the maker of all things; but they think that he pays no attention to the affairs of men, leaving the government of the world to inferior beings, to whom, therefore, all their devotions are addressed. Like the *Egyptians* and

* *La Croze*, II. p. 293. (P.) "Les Indiens leur attribuent toutes leurs sciences et leurs arts. Cependant ils ont persécuté leur secte, et l'ont bannie de leur pays." *Ibid*.

† See the work entitled *Russia*, 1780, (*Introd.*) p. lxxvi., from different parts of which the following account of *Schamanism* is chiefly taken. It is commonly ascribed to Mr. Tooke, and is certainly a work of great value. (P.)

‡ *Ibid*. p. lxxvii. (P.)

§ *Ibid*. pp. lxxx. lxxxi.

Hindoos, they represent the divine attributes by the figure of both the sexes. Both the celestial bodies, and all terrestrial objects of considerable magnitude, are objects of worship to them, though some of them only believe that mountains, and great bodies of water, are the habitations of the gods, and not themselves animated. They have, however, a great variety of subordinate deities, whom they invoke for different purposes, viz. one for health, another for their cattle, another when they travel, another for the women, another for their children, another for their reindeer, &c. &c. &c., thinking that particular spirits preside over, and have the care of them. But though they have goddesses, as well as gods, they do not believe that they are married. These spirits they suppose appear to their priests in the form of bears, serpents, or owls; and on this account they have a particular respect for those animals.

Besides these deities of a nature superior to man, the *Siberians* worship the *manes* of their ancestors, and especially the settlers of colonies, whom they regard as demigods, imagining that the gods make use of their ministry in the government of the world.

They not only suppose that there are superior beings of very different dispositions, some friendly and others unfriendly to men, but think the best-disposed of them are sometimes partial, obstinate, and vindictive; and over the malevolent deities they place one of much superior power, whom they call *Schaitan*. But though he is very wicked, they think it possible to appease him, and, therefore, much of their worship is addressed to him.

They have no temples, but perform their religious rites in the open air, on eminences or the banks of rivers. In some places their religious ceremonies are performed at any hour of the day indifferently, but generally during the night, by the light of a fire kindled for the purpose.

They have idols of stone or wood, having some rude resemblance of the human form, and they pretend to feed them, smearing their faces with blood and grease. By way of incensing them, they make a smoke with burning flesh, blood, or boughs of fir and wormwood, before them. But when misfortunes befall them, they load them with abuse, sometimes dash them against the ground, throw them into the water, or beat them with rods. The *Kamtchadales* erect little pillars, which they entwine with ivy, and regard them as gods.

They expect but little from their prayers not accompanied

with offerings; and except swine, they believe that almost all other animals, as well as birds, fishes, and eatables of every kind, will be acceptable. In travelling they often make these offerings to the mountains they pass by, or to the rivers they cross.

Their modes of divination are various: one of them is performed in the following manner: Having made an offering to their gods, they throw up the wooden bowl in which it was presented into the air, and if it light on the ground, with its mouth upwards, they think it a good omen; but if it fall with the mouth downwards, they think the gods have not accepted their offerings.

Man they believe to be a compound of soul and body; and that immediately after death, the soul passes into another state of existence; which, however, most of them think to be at best a very uncomfortable one, and therefore they have a great dread of death. But others of them expect to go into a state better than the present, and one that will abound with sensual gratifications, and these sometimes put an end to their lives with much unconcern. Some, also, order their bodies to be burned, as a means of purifying them, and thereby securing them from the persecution of subterranean spirits; for they suppose all the dead to be in a place under ground.

Though they do not think the soul to be a solid substance, they think that its employment, and enjoyments too, in a future state, will be similar to those in this; and, therefore, they bury with them cattle, and utensils of various kinds, whatever has been of any use to them here. Also, believing animals to have souls as well as men, they speak to the bears and whales, &c. after they have killed them, as if they were living and reasonable beings. Women they regard as greatly inferior to men, created merely to be subservient to men, and their treatment of them is contemptuous and shocking.

The priesthood among the professors of this religion does not descend from father to son, but is a voluntary profession. Their priests are considered as mediators between the gods and men, and possessing a power of appeasing the wrath of the gods and conciliating their favour. By beating a magical drum they pretend to make spirits appear and disappear at pleasure; and during the celebration of their religious rites, they say, that their souls sometimes leave their bodies, and having conversed with their gods, they report what they have learned of them, so that there is much artifice mixed with their superstition.

The religion of the *North Americans* is fundamentally the same with that of the *Siberians*, which furnishes another evidence of their derivation from them. It will hardly, however, be supposed that this system, though probably more ancient than the times of Moses, was of any use to him in the formation of his. Every system of Heathenism, ancient or modern, was formed on principles fundamentally different from those of the *Hebrew Scriptures*.

SECTION IX.

Of the different Castes among the Hindoos.

ONE of the circumstances in which I have observed that there was an agreement between the institutions of the *Hindoos* and those of the *Egyptians*, was the division of the people according to their professions, or employments. These make so many different *castes*, in each of which the son is obliged to follow the profession of his father. But this distinction is carried much farther, and much more stress is laid upon it in the *Hindoo* system. It makes an important part of their religion; whereas with the *Egyptians* it was rather a civil institution. It is a system, however, which, not having been adopted by mankind in general, must have been thought improper and inconvenient; and certainly it is so in a high degree.

All men, it cannot be denied, are born equal, and reason requires that no distinctions be made after birth, besides such as the good of the whole community makes necessary. It is, no doubt, the best upon the whole, that the son should inherit the father's estate, because it is a powerful motive to general industry; and most nations have allowed peculiar privileges to certain classes of their citizens, in order to prevent dangerous contentions, and because it was thought that, educated as they necessarily would be, they would be better qualified to serve their country in certain respects. On this account there have been families of *nobles* in most of the countries of *Europe*; but this had been found by experience to have been carried too far, that is, farther than the common good required. Such privileges are now generally regarded with jealousy and dislike. They have not been adopted in this country, they are now discarded in *France*, [1790,] and in other countries of *Europe*.

In the *East*, in general, there are no hereditary honours or

employments, except in that of the reigning family, and in some that of the priesthood, because it was thought that a peculiar degree of sanctity (the idea of which was by some means or other attached to a particular family) made them more revered. But the *Hindoos* have not only hereditary princes and priests, but every separate employment is confined to certain tribes or families, and the most unnecessary and unjust distinctions are made with respect to them.

This system must confine the faculties of men, nature often fitting them for one employment and the system confining them to another. Indeed, with us we see few men making any distinguished figure in the employment for which they were educated. Great natural ability generally leads men to look beyond what is immediately before them, and to attempt something of which their parents and family have been incapable; and opportunities frequently occur which enable them to pursue their natural inclination. Also men frequently change their pursuits to their own advantage and that of the public.

But the great wisdom ascribed to the founders of the *Hindoo* institutions has made no provision to favour this propensity of nature. On the contrary, the greatest stress imaginable is by the *Hindoos* laid on the difference of rank in society, and in their opinion nothing can be of more consequence. "In whatever country," say the *Institutes of Menu*, "such men are born as destroy the purity of the four classes, that country soon perishes, together with the natives of it."* This, however, is a prediction that does not appear to have been verified by fact. As this distinction of *castes* is one of the leading features in the system of the *Hindoos*, and many of their laws and customs have a reference to it, I must not content myself with giving this general account, but enter into many particulars relating to it.

The origin which the *Hindoos* give to this distinction of *castes* is not a little fanciful. In the *Institutes of Menu*, where the Supreme Being is spoken of in the form of *Brahma*, we read, "That the human race might be multiplied, he caused the *Bráhmén*, the *Cshatriya*, the *Vaisya*, and the *Súdra*,—to proceed from his mouth, his arm, his thigh, and his feet."† The same account is given by the *Pundits* who compiled the *Code of Gentoo Laws*, with this seeming difference, that these four *castes* were created by the

* *Instit.* p. 296. (*P.*) Ch. x. 61; *Jones*, VIII. p. 67.

† *Instit.* p. 5. (*P.*) Ch. i. 31; *Jones*, VII. p. 96.

Supreme Being himself, who left the remainder of the creation to be completed by *Brahma*, or, as he is there called, *Burmha*. “The principle of truth,” as quoted before, [p. 170,] “having first formed the earth,—produced a being called *Burmhà*,—for the creation of all beings. Afterwards he created the *Bramin* from his mouth, the *Chehteree* from his arms, the *Bice* from his thighs, and the *Sooder* from his feet; and he ordered *Burmhà* to complete the other creations, and settle the several employments respectively of the *Bramin*, the *Chehteree*, the *Bice*, and the *Sooder*, that he had created; and he committed the government of all beings to *Burmhà*.” It immediately follows, however, that *Burmhà* produced men as well as other creatures; so that, according to this work, there seems to have been two origins of mankind. Perhaps we are to understand that the *Hindoos* came immediately from the Supreme Being, and the rest of mankind from *Burmhà*.

The four orders being produced, their respective duties were assigned to them as follows: “To *Bráhmens* he assigned the duties of reading the *Vèda*, of teaching it, of sacrificing, of assisting others to sacrifice.—To defend the people, to give alms, to sacrifice, to read the *Vèda*,—are the duties of a *Cshatriya*. To keep herds of cattle, to bestow largesses, to sacrifice, to read the scripture, to carry on trade, to lend at interest, and to cultivate the land, are prescribed or permitted to a *Vaisya*. One principal duty the Supreme Ruler assigned to a *Súdra*; viz. to serve the before-mentioned classes, without depreciating their worth.”*

These offices are not, however, so rigorously prescribed, but that many cases occur in which a person of a higher order may do what belongs to a lower. Thus, “a *Bráhmen*, unable to subsist by his *proper* duties, may live by the duty of a soldier;” if not by this, then “he may subsist as a mercantile man, applying himself *in person* to tillage and attendance on cattle.” “A military man in distress may subsist by all these means, but at no time must have recourse to the highest, or *sacerdotal* function.” And, “he who, *without necessity*, discharges the duties of another class, immediately forfeits his own.”†

Notwithstanding all the provisions of law, it was not possible to prevent an intermixture of these classes, by the intermarriage of persons living in the same society. This

* *Instit.* p. 12. (P.) Ch. i. 88—91; *Jones*, VII. pp. 105, 106.

† *Instit.* p. 299. (P.) Ch. x. 81, 82, 95, 97; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 70, 71.

was a circumstance for which the laws themselves have therefore provided. "By intermixture of classes," say the *Institutes of Menu*, "by their marriages with women who ought not to be married, and by their omission of prescribed duties, impure classes have been formed."* These classes are here enumerated, and their ranks and employments prescribed; and in this account it is said, that "a *Súdra* begets on a *Bráhmén* woman a son more vile than himself," and "any other low man begets on women of the four classes a son yet lower. The six low classes, marrying inversely, beget fifteen yet lower tribes, the base producing still baser; and in a direct order they produce fifteen more."†

In the *Code of Gentoo Laws* those base classes are called *Burrun-sunker*, and they are subdivided into as many separate classes as there are trades or occupations to be exercised by them. They are said to be twenty-nine.‡ *La Croze* says, they were in all ninety-eight.§

The employments of each of these tribes are delineated at length in the *Institutes of Menu*, and I shall mention a few as a specimen of the rest.—"From a *Brahmen*" and "a *Súdra* wife" is born "a *Nisháda*.—From a *Súdra* on women of the commercial, military, and priestly classes, are born sons of a mixed breed." By one of the military class a *Cshattri*, by a *Brahmen* woman, a "*Chandála*, the lowest of mortals.—The son of a *Nisháda* by a woman of the *Súdra* class is a *Puccasa*.—From a *Cshatriya*," by a *Súdra* woman, "springs a creature called *Ugrá*, with a nature, partly warlike and partly servile, ferocious in his manners, cruel in his acts." From "a *Cshattri* by an *Ugrá*," comes "a *Suapáca*.—From a *Chandála*, by a *Puccasí* woman is born a *Sópáca*, who lives by punishing criminals condemned by the king, a sinful wretch ever despised by the virtuous. A *Nishádí* woman by a *Chandála* produces a son called *Antyavasayin*, employed in places for burning the dead, contemned even by the contemptible."||

We have seen that, according to the *Pundits* who compiled the *Code of Gentoo Laws*, different races of men may spring from a mixture of the inhabitants of the different *Deeps*, or continents before-mentioned. From a man of

* *Instit.* p. 292. (P.) Ch. x. 24; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 61, 62.

† *Instit.* Ch. x. 30, 31; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 62, 63.

‡ *Pref.* pp. cii. ciii. cvi.—cix. (P.)

§ *Histoire*, II. p. 295. (P.) "Ils en comptent par diverses subdivisions jusqu'à nonante-huit, dont les missionaries Danois ont écrit les noms et les divers emplois." *Ibid.*

|| *Instit.* p. 294. (P.) Ch. x. 8, 9, 12, 18, 19, 38, 39; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 59, 61, 64.

Shákud Deep, “cast down upon *Jumboo Deep*,” came, they say, the “tribe called *Deiool*.” They then add, “From a man of the *Deiool*, and a woman of the *Bice* caste, was derived the tribe of *Gung*, or astronomers,” and other “tribes called *Muluch*,” which “eat forbidden food.—These sprung from the members of the tyrannic *Bein*,” who behaved so ill that “the *Bramins*—put him to death.” This done, these *Pundits* proceed to say, they “rubbed his two hands, and from his right hand produced a son named *Pert-hoo*,—skilled in the science of war, and a *Pundit* in the *Shaster*, and in form and shape like to the *Dewtáh*; and from his left hand they raised a daughter, and this daughter they married to *Pert-hoo*,” and under them every thing flourished.* All this is delivered with the greatest gravity in their account of the creation.

These four *castes* are so distinguished by their outward appearance that they cannot be mistaken. They not only dress in a different manner,† but have different staves for walking with, being made of different kinds of wood, and of different lengths.‡ They also use different girdles to bind their garments about them.§

The three higher classes are called *twice born*, but the fourth only *once born*, that is, according to the *Institutes of Menu*, they have no second birth from the *Gáyatrí*, which is a form of prayer, or as it is sometimes called, of incantation, from the *Vedas*, and which is not to be used by the *Súdras*. In the farther explanation of this circumstance it is said, “Let a man consider that as a mere human birth, which his parents gave him,—but that birth which his principal *ácharya*, who knows the whole *Véda*, procures for him, by his *divine mother* the *Gáyatrí*, is a true birth: that birth is exempt from age, and from death.”|| That is, I suppose, the privilege obtained by it extends beyond this life. “The first birth is from a natural mother; the second

* *Pref.* pp. civ. cv. (*P.*)

† *Instit.* p. 23. (*P.*) “The students in theology” were directed to “wear for their mantles the hides of black antelopes, of common deer, or of goats, with lower rests of woven *s’ana*, of *cshumá*, and of wool, in the direct order of the classes.” *Ch.* ii. 41. *Jones*, VII. pp. 117, 118.

‡ “The staff of a priest must reach his hair; that of a soldier his forehead; and that of a merchant, his nose. All the staves” must “be straight, without fracture, of a handsome appearance, not likely to terrify men, with their bark perfect, unhurt by fire.” *Instit.* *Ch.* ii. 46, 47; *Jones*, VII. p. 118.

§ “The girdle of a priest must be made of *munja*, in a triple cord, smooth and soft; that of a warrior must be a bowstring of *múrvá*; that of a merchant, a triple thread of *s’ana*.” *Instit.* *Ch.* ii. 42; *Jones*, VII. p. 118.

|| *Instit.* p. 36. (*P.*) *Ch.* ii. 147, 148; *Jones*, VII. p. 135.

from the ligation of the zone; the third, from the due performance of the sacrifice. Such are the births of him who is usually called twice-born according to the text of the *Véda*.* It should seem, therefore, that some may be said to be not only *twice*, but even *thrice* born, though the phrase commonly used in this work is *twice-born*.

Notwithstanding this distinction of the castes, there are cases in which the highest may sink to the lowest, and the lowest may rise to the highest, at least in another life. Thus, “by selling flesh meat, *lácshá*, or salt, a *Bráhmén* immediately sinks low; by selling milk three days, he falls to a level with a *Súdra*.”† On the other hand, “by the force of extreme devotion, and of exalted fathers, all of them” (the classes) “may rise *in time* to high birth; as *by the reverse* they may sink to a lower state, in every age among mortals in this inferior world.”‡ “Desertion of life without reward, for the sake of preserving a priest, or a cow, a woman, or a child, may cause the beatitude of those base-born tribes.”§

“SERVILE attendance on *Bráhméns* learned in the *Véda*, chiefly on such as keep house, and are famed for virtue, is the highest duty of a *Súdra*, and leads him to future beatitude. Pure *in body and mind*, humbly serving the three higher classes, mild in speech, never arrogant, ever seeking refuge in *Bráhméns* principally, he may attain the most eminent class *in another transmigration*.”||

“These tribes,” says Mr. Dow, “do not intermarry, eat, drink, or in any manner associate with one another, except when they worship at the temple of *Jagga-nat* in *Orissa*, where it is held a crime to make any distinction.”¶

Much less will the *Hindoos* use any thing in common with persons of other nations. They regard them all with the greatest abhorrence, and no necessity will make them eat or drink with them. The *Egyptians* had the same superstitious ideas. We see in the Scriptures that they did not eat even with *Joseph*, though he was the prime minister in the country, or with any who are there called *shepherds*. Herodotus says, that no Egyptian, man or woman, will use any thing belonging to a Greek, or taste flesh cut with their knives.**

* *Instit.* p. 38. (P.) Ch. ii. 169; *Jones*, VII. p. 138.

† *Instit.* p. 300. (P.) Ch. x. 92; *Jones*, VIII. p. 72.

‡ *Instit.* p. 249. (P.) Ch. x. 42; *Jones*, VIII. p. 64.

§ *Instit.* p. 296. (P.) Ch. x. 62; *Jones*, VIII. p. 67.

|| *Instit.* p. 288. (P.) Ch. ix. 385; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 56, 57.

¶ *Hindustan (Dissert.)*, l. p. xxxi. (P.) ** *Euterpe* (L. ii.), xli. (P.)

SECTION X.

Of the Bramins.

THE prerogatives of the *Hindoo* Bramins deserve a particular consideration, as there is not in all history another example of such respect being claimed, or obtained, by any class of men whatever. In the *Preface* to the *Code of Gentoo Laws*, it is justly observed, that “the people of Hindostan pay *the Bramins* a degree of personal respect little short of idolatry, in return for the advantages supposed to be derived from their studies.”*

Mr. Holwell says, “*Bramah* is the title solely appropriated to the promulger of the *Shastah*, and implies the spirituality and divinity of his mission and doctrines. Hence it is that his successors assumed the name of *Bramins*, supposing themselves to inherit the same divine spirit.”†

In the *Institutes of Menu* we read, that “from priority of birth, from superiority of origin, from a more exact knowledge of scripture, and from a distinction in the sacrificial thread, the *Brâhmen* is the lord of all classes.”‡ “From his high birth alone a *Brâhmen* is an object of veneration even to deities: his declarations to mankind are decisive evidence; and the *Vêda* itself confers on him this character.”§ Much, however, of the dignity which the *Bramins* may attain depends upon their acquirements. “A priest who has gone through the whole *Vêda* is *equal* to a sovereign of all the world.”||

Yet, great as is the respect with which the Bramins are treated, it is not more than they are entitled to, if they be of so much importance as is pretended. According to the *Institutes of Menu*, the prosperity of the state, and even that of the world, depends upon them. “Of that king,” it is there said, “in whose dominion a learned *Brâhmen* is afflicted with hunger, the whole kingdom will in a short time be afflicted with famine.—By that religious duty which such a *Brâhmen* performs each day, under the full

* Halhed's *Pref.*, p. x. (P.)

† *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 7. (P.)

‡ *Instit.* p. 289. (P.) Ch. x. 3; *Jones*, VIII. p. 58.

§ *Instit.* p. 319. (P.) Ch. x. 85; *Jones*, VIII. p. 96.

|| *Instit.* p. 277. (P.) Ch. ix. 245; *Jones*, VIII. p. 43.

protection of the sovereign, the life, wealth and dominion of his protector shall be greatly increased.”* But this is not all. “The Being who exists of himself, produced the *Bráhmén* from his own mouth; that, having performed holy rites, he might present clarified butter to the gods, and cakes of rice to the progenitors of mankind, for the preservation of this world. What created being then can surpass him, with whose mouth the gods of the firmament continually feast on clarified butter, and the manes of ancestors on hallowed cakes?”†

But the following passages from this *Hindoo* work will perhaps give us a still higher idea of the power and importance of the order of Bramins. “Let not *the king*, although in the greatest distress for money, provoke *Bráhméns* to anger by taking their property; for they, once enraged, could immediately, *by sacrifices and imprecations*, destroy him, with his troops, elephants, horses, and cars. Who, without perishing, could provoke those holy men, by whom, *that is, by whose ancestors under BRAHMA*, the all-devouring fire was created, the sea with waters not drinkable, and the moon with its wane and increase? What prince could gain wealth by oppressing those who, if angry, could frame other worlds, and regents of worlds; could give being to new gods and mortals? What man desirous of life would injure those by the aid of whom, *that is, by whose oblations*, worlds and gods perpetually subsist; those who are rich in the learning of the *Véda*? A *Bráhmén*, whether learned or ignorant, is a powerful divinity; even as fire is a powerful divinity; whether consecrated or popular. Even in places for burning the dead, the bright fire is undefiled; and when presented with clarified butter, at *subsequent* sacrifices, blazes again with extreme splendour. Thus, although *Bráhméns* employ themselves in all sorts of mean occupation, they must invariably be honoured; for they are something transcendently divine.”‡

Such being the natural dignity of this order of men, we do not wonder that, according to these *Institutes*, there is no greater merit than that of shewing favour to Bramins, and no greater crime than that of injuring them. “Let every man, according to his ability, give wealth to *Bráhméns* detached from the world, and learned in scripture: such a

* *Instit.* p. 179. (P.) Ch. vii. 134, 136; *Jones*, VII. p. 313.

† *Instit.* p. 13. (P.) Ch. i. 94, 95; *Jones*, VII. p. 106.

‡ *Instit.* pp. 285, 286. (P.) Ch. ix. 313—319; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 53, 54.

giver shall attain heaven after this life.”* “By entertaining one learned man at the oblation to the gods, and at that to ancestors, he gains more exalted fruit, than by feeding a multitude who know not the holy texts.”† “An oblation in the mouth *or hand* of a *Bráhmén* is far better than offerings to holy fire: it never drops; it never dries; it is never consumed. A gift to one not a *Bráhmén* produces fruit of a middle standard; to one who calls himself a *Bráhmén*, double; to a well read *Bráhmén*, a hundred thousand fold; to one who has read all the *Védas*, infinite.”‡

The *Hindoos* think that in many cases the merit of one person may be transferred to another, as we have seen on a former occasion; and according to the *Institutes of Menu*, “A *Bráhmén*, coming as a guest, and not received with just honour, takes to himself all the reward of the housekeeper’s former virtue, even though he had been so temperate as to live on the gleanings of harvests, and so pious as to make oblations in five distinct fires.”§

Notwithstanding this high distinction, the *Bramin* does not, in some respects, stand higher than a cow. For the same *Institutes* say, “For the preservation of a cow, or a *Bráhmén*,” let a man “instantly abandon life; since the preserver of a cow, or of a *Bráhmén*, atones for the crime of killing a priest, or by attempting at least three times forcibly to recover *from robbers* the property of a *Bráhmén*, or by recovering it in one of his attacks, or even by losing his life in the attempt, he atones for his crime.”||

We may form some idea of the value of these services when we are told in the same *Institutes*, that “no greater crime is known on earth than slaying a *Bráhmén*,” and that “the king must not even form in his mind an idea of killing a priest.”¶ (We find the same in the *Code of Gentoo Laws*, p. 283, where it is added, that “a magistrate must not even cut off his limb.”) “For striking a *Bráhmén* even with a blade of grass, or tying him by the neck with a cloth, or overpowering him in argument, and adding contemptuous words, the offender must soothe him by falling prostrate.”** An atonement is appointed “for killing a priest *without*

* *Instit.* p. 308. (P.) Ch. xi. 6; *Jones*, VIII. p. 82.

† *Instit.* p. 68. (P.) Ch. iii. 129; *Jones*, VII. pp. 174, 175.

‡ *Instit.* p. 169. (P.) Ch. vii. 84, 85; *Jones*, VII. p. 305.

§ *Instit.* p. 64. (P.) Ch. iii. 100; *Jones*, VII. pp. 169, 170.

|| *Instit.* p. 318. (P.) Ch. xi. 80, 81; *Jones*, VIII. p. 95.

¶ *Instit.* p. 238. (P.) Ch. viii. 381; *Jones*, VII. p. 392.

** *Instit.* p. 335. (P.) Ch. xi. 206; *Jones*, VIII. p. 118.

malice, but for killing a *Bráhmén* with malice prepense," there is "no expiation.—If the case was atrocious, the murderer must actually die in flames, or in battle."*

In the *Institutes of Menu*, kings are particularly instructed how to behave to the *Bramins*, and the following is a specimen of their instructions on this head: "Having appointed the *Bráhmén* a maintenance, let the king protect him on all sides; for he gains from the *Bráhmén*, whom he protects, a sixth part of the reward for his virtue."† "Let the king, having risen at early dawn, respectfully attend to *Bráhméns*, learned in the three *Védas*, and in the science of Ethics; and by their decision let him abide. Constantly must he shew respect to *Bráhméns*.—To one learned *Bráhmén*, distinguished among them all, let the king impart his momentous counsel.—To him with full confidence let him intrust all transactions."‡ "For the full discharge of his duty, let him give the *Bráhméns* both legal enjoyments and moderate wealth."§ Lastly, "Should the king be near his end, through some incurable disease, he must bestow on the priests all his riches, accumulated from legal fines."||

Some of the prerogatives of the *Bramins* are of a singular nature, giving them advantages which have no relation to their office. "A learned *Bráhmén*, having found a treasure formerly hidden, may take it without any deduction; since he is the lord of all; but of a treasure anciently reposed under ground, which any other subject, or the king, has discovered, the king may lay up half in his treasury, having given half to the *Bráhméns*."¶ "If a widow should give all her property and estate to the *Bramins* for religious purposes, the gift indeed is valid,** but the act is improper, and the woman is blameable."†† A *Bramin* is not required to pay so much for interest of money as any of the other classes.‡‡

The following article is particularly curious, and shews how very defective are the fundamental principles of the *Hindoo* jurisprudence and morality: "If a man, by the impulse of lust, tell lies to a woman, or if his own life would

* *Instit.* p. 319. (P.) Ch. xi. 90; *Jones*, VIII. p. 97.

† *Instit.* p. 340. (P.) Ch. xi. 23; *Jones*, VIII. p. 85.

‡ *Instit.* pp. 160, 163. (P.) Ch. vii. 37, 38, 58, 59; *Jones*, VII. pp. 297, 301.

§ *Instit.* p. 169. (P.) Ch. vii. 79; *Jones*, VII. p. 304.

|| *Instit.* p. 286. (P.) Ch. ix. 323; *Jones*, VIII. p. 55.

¶ *Instit.* p. 194. (P.) Ch. viii. 37, 38; *Jones*, VII. pp. 335, 336.

** "That is, it comes within the letter of the law." *Halked.*

†† *Gentoo Laws*, (Halhed's Pref.,) pp. liv. lv. (P.)

‡‡ *Gentoo Laws*, p. 2. (P.) "If a loan be granted to a man of the *Bicc* caste, he shall be charged double the interest of a *Bramin*." *Ibid.*

otherwise be lost, or all the goods of his house spoiled, or if it be for the benefit of a *Bramin*, in such affairs falsehood is allowable.”*

Sacred as is the character of a *Bramin* among the Hindoos, it is in one respect inferior to that of the “*Distoore*, or high-priest” of the *Persees*; for, according to Mr. Lord, “he must never touch any of a strange caste or sect, of what religion soever, nor any layman of his own religion.”†

Holy and venerable as these *Bramins* are, it is not, however, pretended that they are impeccable. What then is to be done if they offend? Certainly, in them a breach of the law is a greater crime than in any other order of men, who have less knowledge and more temptation. But the *Hindoo* lawgivers were of a different opinion; for in all cases the punishments of *Bramins* are lighter than those of other men; and whatever they do, their lives, their limbs, their liberty, and even their property cannot be touched, as we see in the following laws respecting them:

“Never shall the king slay a *Bráhmén*, though convicted of all possible crimes: let him banish the offender from his realm, but with all his property secure, and his body unhurt.”‡ “Let a just prince banish men of the three *lower* classes, if they give false evidence, having first levied the fine; but a *Bráhmén* let him only banish.”§ “*MENU*, son of the Self-existent, has named ten places of punishment, which are appropriated to the three *lower* classes; but a *Bráhmén* must depart from the realm unhurt in any one of them: the part of generation, the belly, the tongue, the two hands, the two feet, the eye, the nose, both ears, the property, and, in a capital case, the whole body.”|| “Ignominious tonsure is,” however, “ordained, instead of capital punishment for an adulterer of the priestly class, where the punishment of other classes may extend to loss of life.”¶ “The property of a *Bráhmén* shall never be taken as an *escheat* by the king: this is a fixed law: but the wealth

* *Gentoo Laws*, p. 115. (P.)

† *Religion of the Persees*, p. 86.

‡ *Instit.* p. 238. (P.) Ch. viii. 380; *Jones*, VII. p. 392.

§ *Instit.* p. 201. [Ch. viii. 123; *Jones*, VII. p. 351.] Mr. Dow, therefore, must be mistaken when he says, of “Treason, incest, murder, &c., we do not find that the *Brahmins* have exempted themselves from the punishment of death when guilty of those crimes. This,” he says, “is one of the numerous fables which modern travellers import from the East.” (*Hindustan (Dissert.)*, I. p. xxxiv.) *Plutarch*, in his *Roman Questions*, says, “Other priests,” might be “condemned, or banished, but no augur could be removed from his priesthood, though convicted of the greatest crimes.” (P.) Q. 99; *Morals*, II. (Pt. v.) p. 70.

|| *Instit.* p. 201. (P.) Ch. viii. 124, 125; *Jones*, VII. p. 351.

¶ *Instit.* p. 237. (P.) Ch. viii. 379; *Jones*, VII. pp. 391, 392.

of the other classes, on failure of all heirs, the king may take.”*

“If a *Bráhmén* have killed a man of the sacerdotal class without malice prepense, the slayer, being far superior to the slain in good qualities, he must himself make a hut in a forest, and dwell in it twelve whole years, subsisting on alms, for the purification of his soul, placing near him, as a token of his crime, the skull of the slain, if he can procure it, or if not, any human skull. The time of penance for the three lower classes must be twenty-four, thirty-six, and forty-eight years: or, if the slayer be of the military class, he may voluntarily expose himself as a mark to archers, who know his intention, or—may cast himself headlong thrice, or even till he die, into blazing fire.”†

Bramins are supposed to be capable of the most unnatural vices; but even in such cases they are to suffer less than offenders of the lower classes in the same way. “If a *Bramin* should copulate with a cow, the magistrate shall fine him eighty gold coins; if he be a *Chehteree*, or a *Bice*, he shall fine him five hundred *puns* of *coweries*; if he be a *Sooder*, he shall put him to death.”‡

We find, however, the following exception in favour of reason and justice: “The fine of a *Súdra*, for theft, shall be eightfold; that of a *Vaisya*, sixteenfold; that of *Cshatriya*, two-and-thirtyfold; that of a *Bráhmén*, four-and-sixtyfold, or a hundredfold complete, or even twice four-and-sixtyfold; each of them knowing the nature of his offence.”§

The ancient *Germans* appear to have had a high idea of the sacredness of their priests. According to *Tacitus*, “the power of inflicting pains and penalties, of striking and binding a criminal, was vested in the priests alone;|| and these

* *Instit.* p. 270. (P.) Ch. ix. 189; *Jones*, VIII. p. 33.

† *Instit.* p. 317. (P.) Ch. xi. 73, 74; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 93, 94.

‡ *Gentoo Laws*, p. 248. (P.)

§ *Instit.* p. 232. (P.) Ch. viii. 337, 338; *Jones*, VII. p. 385.

|| “Neque animadvertere, neque vincere, neque verberare quidem nisi sacerdotibus permissum.” *De Moribus Germ.* Sect. vii. Thus the *Druids*, according to *Cæsar*, “Præmia pænasque constituunt. Si quis, aut privatus, aut publicus, eorum decreto non steterit, sacrificiis interdicunt. Hæc pæna apud eos est gravissima.” *De Bel. Gal.* L. vi. Sect. xiii. (They decree rewards and punishments. If a private person or magistrate disputes their sentence, they forbid him the sacrifices. This is their severest punishment.)

Among the *Germans*, *Cæsar* ascribes such power to the *civil* magistrate: “Quum bellum civitas aut illatum defendit, aut infert; magistratus, qui ei bello præsent, ut vitæ necisque habeant potestatem, deliguntur.” *Ibid.* Sect. xxi. On a war, defensive or offensive, the magistrates, chosen to command, have the power of life and death.) This power seems to have been peculiar to a state of war, for *Cæsar* adds, “in pace nullus est communis magistratus.” *Ibid.* (In peace they have no chief magistrate.)

men, so haughty, who thought themselves dishonoured if they did not revenge the slightest offence, would, trembling, submit to blows, and even death itself, from the hand of the pontiff, whom they took for the instrument of an angry deity.”*

In proportion to this excessive elevation of the *Bramin*, is the equally unnatural degradation and depression of the poor *Sudra*. Indeed, that any part of the human species should submit to such a state is most extraordinary. All the following are among the laws of *Menu* relating to them :

“ A man of the servile class, whether bought or unbought, a *Bráhmén* may compel to perform servile duty ; because such a man was created by the Self-existent for the purpose of serving *Bráhmens*. A *Súdra*, though emancipated by his master, is not released from a state of servitude ; for of a state which is natural to him, by whom can he be divested ? For a *Súdra* is ordained a wife of his own class, and no other.—No *superfluous* collection of wealth must be made by a *Súdra*, even though he has power to make it, since a servile man, who has amassed riches, becomes proud, and by his insolence or neglect, gives pain even to *Bráhmens*.”†
The little value that is set on the life of a *Sudra* may be seen in the following law : “ If a person kill, by design, a cat, an ichneumon, the bird *Chásha*, or a frog, a dog, a lizard, an owl, or a crow, he must perform the ordinary penance required for the death of a *Súdra*.”‡

This class of men must be supposed to be as odious to the gods as they are to men, and no doubt from an opinion of their being in a state of punishment for offences committed in a prior state. For they say, “ The whole territory which is inhabited by a number of *Súdras*, overwhelmed with Atheists, and deprived of *Bráhmens*, must speedily perish, afflicted with dearth and disease.”§

The *Hindoo* system, however, supposes that even a *Sudra* may have merit and become entitled to reward : for we read that “ as a *Súdra*, without injuring another man, performs the lawful acts of the twice-born, even thus, without being censured, he gains exaltation in this world and in the next.”|| He has likewise the privilege of living where he

* Mallett's *North. Antiq.* I. pp. 141, 142. (P.)

† *Instit.* pp. 242, 265, 306. (P.) Ch. viii. 413, 414, ix. 157, x. 129 ; *Jones*, VII. pp. 397, 398, VIII. pp. 27, 79.

‡ *Instit.* p. 325. (P.) Ch. xi. 132 ; *Jones*, VIII. p. 105.

§ *Instit.* p. 192. (P.) Ch. viii. 22 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 338.

|| *Instit.* p. 305. (P.) Ch. x. 128 ; *Jones*, VIII. p. 79.

pleases. A certain district is particularly described in the *Institutes of Menu*, in which persons of the three highest classes must dwell; “but a *Súdra*,” it is said, “distressed for subsistence, may sojourn wherever he chuses.”*

But the superiority of the *Bramin* to the *Sudra* will appear in the strongest light in the laws and regulations which at the same time relate to them both. I select the following with this view: “Attendance on *Bráhmens* is pronounced the best work of a *Súdra*. Whatever else he may perform will comparatively avail him nothing.”† “A once-born man who insults the twice-born with gross invectives, ought to have his tongue slit; for he sprang from the lowest part of *BRÁHMA*. If he mention their name and classes with contumely, as if he say ‘*Oh DE’VADATTA, thou refuse of Bráhmens,*’ an iron style ten fingers long shall be thrust red-hot into his mouth. Should he, through pride, give instruction to priests concerning their duty, let the king order some hot oil to be dropped into his mouth and his ear.”‡ “If a *Sooder* sits upon the carpet of a *Bramin*, in that case, the magistrate, having thrust a hot iron into his buttock, and branded him, shall banish him the kingdom; or else he shall cut off his buttock.”§ “If a *Sooder*, out of pride, shall spit his phlegm upon a *Bramin*’s body, the magistrate shall cut off his lip; and if a *Sooder* pisses upon a *Bramin*’s body, the magistrate shall cut off his *penis*; and if he should evacuate backwards his wind upon a *Bramin*’s body, he shall cut off his fundament. If a *Sooder* hath plucked a *Bramin* by the hair, or the beard, or should take hold of a *Bramin*’s neck, the magistrate shall cut off both his hands.”|| But what follows is even more than this. For “if a *Sooder* gives much and frequent molestation to a *Bramin*, the magistrate shall put him to death.”¶ A *Bramin* though under obligation to live on alms, must not apply to a *Sudra*. “Let no *Bráhmen* ever beg a gift from a *Súdra*; for, if he perform a sacrifice after such begging, he shall, in the next life, be born a *Chandála*.”**

Low, however, as is the *Sudra*, all those who have had the misfortune to be born in the *Burren-Sunker* classes are lower still, as the following account will shew: “The abode

* *Instit.* p. 20. (P.) Ch. ii. 24; *Jones*, VII. p. 115.

† *Instit.* p. 305. (P.) Ch. x. 123; *Jones*, VIII. p. 78.

‡ *Instit.* p. 224. (P.) Ch. viii. 270—272; *Jones*, VII. p. 375.

§ *Gentoo Laws*, p. 207. (P.) || *Ibid.* p. 208. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* p. 262. (P.)

** *Instit.* p. 310. (P.) Ch. xi. 24; *Jones*, VIII. p. 85.

of a *Chandála* and a *Swapáca*, must be of out of the town. They must not have the use of entire vessels; their sole wealth must be dogs and asses. Their clothes must be the mantles of the deceased; their dishes for food, broken pots; their ornaments, rusty iron; continually must they roam from place to place. Let no man who regards his duty, religious and civil, hold any intercourse with them. Let their transactions be confined to themselves, and their marriages only between equals. Let food be given to them in potsherds, but not by the hands of the giver; and let them not walk by night in cities or towns. By day they may walk about for the purpose of work, distinguished by the king's badges; and they shall carry out the corpse of every one who dies without kindred: such is the fixed rule. They shall always kill those who are to be slain by the sentence of the law, and by the royal warrant, and let them take the clothes of the slain, their beds, and their ornaments.*

It will always remain a problem not easy to be solved, how one part of the same community can keep another part of it in such a wretched state of degradation and servitude, even supposing, what is not said to have been the case here, that the *Sudras* were originally prisoners taken in war; for the effect of that circumstance would cease in a few generations. But it may be accounted for, in some measure, from the deplorable state of ignorance in which this degraded order of men is studiously kept. Such legal provisions for perpetual ignorance are altogether unknown in any other country. It fills one with horror to read of some of them, and yet M. *Langles*, the encomiast of this system, commends even this part of it. He calls the *Bramins* "faithful guardians of the sacred trust confided to them. They dispose of it," he says, "with the greatest discretion, teaching the common people what they must know in order to the practice of virtue, and to enjoy the happiness inseparable from a life free from reproach."† Let us now hear what this discretion is, and whether the object of it be to serve themselves, or the common people.

The *Institutes of Menu* say, "Let the three twice-born classes, remaining firm in their several duties, carefully read the *Véda*; but a *Bráhmén* must explain it to them, not a

* *Instit.* pp. 295, 296. (P.) Ch. x. 51—56; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 66, 67.

† *Discours Prélim.* p. 9. (P.)

man of the other two classes.”* “This code of laws must be studied with extreme care by every learned *Bráhmén*, and tully explained to his disciples, but *must be taught by no other man of an inferior class.*”†

The extreme caution with which this rule is observed, we see in the conduct of the learned Bramin with respect to Sir William Jones. “The *Bráhmén* who read with *him*” the *Institutes of Menu*, the work out of which I have made so many extracts, and out of which I shall give many more, “requested most earnestly that his name might be concealed; nor would he have read it on any consideration on a forbidden day of the moon, or without the ceremonies prescribed in the second and fourth chapters, for a lecture on the *Véda.*” What those are, will be seen in their place. “When the chief native magistrate of *Banares* endeavoured,” at the request of Sir William, “to procure a *Persian* translation of it,—the *Pandits* of his court unanimously and positively refused to assist in the work.”‡ But to proceed with the *Institutes of Menu* on this head.

A *Bramin* “must never read the *Véda*—in the presence of *Súdras.*” “Let him not give *even temporal* advice to a *Súdra*; nor, *except to his own servant*, what remains from his table; nor clarified butter of which part has been offered to the gods, nor let him, *in person*, give spiritual counsel to such a man, nor *personally* inform him of the legal expiation for his sin. Surely he who declares the law to a servile man, and he who instructs him in the mode of expiating sin, *except,*” it is added by Sir William Jones, § “*by the intervention of a priest*, sinks with that very man into the hell called *Ásamvrita.*”||

These are the restrictions on the part of the *Bramin*. Let us now see what is the consequence to the too curious and

* *Instit.* p. 289. (P.) Ch. x. 1; *Jones*, VIII. p. 56.

† *Instit.* p. 14. (P.) Ch. i. 102, 103; *Jones*, VII. pp. 107, 108.

‡ *Pref.* p. 16. (P.) *Jones*, VII. p. 87. A traveller, who visited *Bengal* in 1702, speaking of “the customs of the *Indians*,” describes “the learned men among their *Brahmans*,” as “persuaded, that their *doctrines* and *rules* are prophaned, whenever they are communicated to foreigners.” *Agreement of Customs of East Indians with Jews*, 1705, pp. v. vi.

§ This addition is “according to the gloss (*supra*, pp. 156, 157) of *Culluca*,” which Sir W. Jones, in his translation, “printed in *italicks*.” See his *Pref.* in *Works*, VII. p. 86. I have endeavoured strictly to follow the translator’s method, in correcting the *extracts* for this edition of the *Comparison*. Sir W. Jones adds, that “any reader who may choose to pass the *gloss* over, as if unprinted, will have in *Roman* letters an exact version of the original, and may form some idea of its character and structure, as well as of the *Sanscrit* idiom, which must necessarily be preserved in a verbal translation.” *Ibid.*

|| *Instit.* pp. 101, 99. (P.) Ch. iv. 99, 80, 81; *Jones*, VII. p. 217, 214, 215.

inquisitive *Sudra*, who should pry into these mysteries. "If a man of the *Souder* read the *Beids* of the *Shaster*, or the *Pooràn* to a *Bramin*, a *Chehteree*, or a *Bice*, then the magistrate shall heat some bitter oil, and pour it into the foresaid *Souder's* mouth; and if a *Souder* listens to the *Beids* of the *Shaster*, then the oil, heated as before, shall be poured into his ears, and *arzeez* and wax shall be melted together, and the orifices of his ears shall be stopped up therewith. This ordination serves also for the *Arzàl* tribe." But even this is not all, or the worst, that may happen to the poor *Sudra* who should endeavour to gather some of the crumbs that fall from the *Bramin's* table, to which, it seems, in any sense of the words, he has no right. "If a *Sooder* gets by heart the *Beids* of the *Shaster*, the magistrate shall put him to death.—If a *Sooder* always performs worship and the *Jugg*, the magistrate shall put him to death, or fine him two hundred *ashrufies*."*

Other Heathen nations had similar illiberal restrictions. The *Egyptian* priests concealed their knowledge "in tales and romantic relations, containing dark hints, and resemblances of truth.—*Pythagoras* imitated their symbolical and mysterious way of talking, obscuring his sentiments with dark riddles,—such as 'Do not eat in a chariot; do not sit on a *chænix* or measure; plant not a palm tree; stir not fire with a knife within the house.'"[†]

The *Druids* made a great mystery of their knowledge. They committed nothing to writing, though *Cæsar* says they had the use of letters,[‡] and they gave no instruction but in their sacred groves.

Such is the boasted *discretion* with which these *venerable teachers* dispensed knowledge to the lower classes of their

* *Gentoo Laws*, pp. 261, 262. (P.) See Vol. IV. p. 508.

† *Plutarch de Iside et Osiride*. (P.) *Morals*, IV. pp. 74, 75.

‡ Speaking of their *schools*, he says, "Magnum ibi numerum versuum ediscere dicuntur. Itaque nonnulli annos vicanos in disciplinâ permanent: neque fas est existimant, ea litteris mandare; quum in reliquis serè rebus publicis, privatisque rationibus, Græcis literis utantur. Id mihi duabus de causis instituisse videntur; quòd neque in vulgus disciplinam efferri velint; neque eos qui discunt, litteris confisos, minùs memoriæ studere." *De Bel. Gal.* L. vi. S. xiii.} (There, where some scholars remain twenty years, they are said to commit to memory a great number of verses. These it is unlawful to write, though in nearly all public and private concerns they use the *Greek* characters. This regulation had probably two objects: they would conceal their learning from the vulgar, and oblige their pupils, by not depending on written instructions, to cultivate their memory.)

While the first object of these *priests* is deservedly exploded, how desirable that the latter purpose of their discipline should be more generally regarded in *Christian* institutions, especially those designed to form public *Christian* teachers, who might thus become *preachers*, in the only proper sense of the expression!

fellow-citizens ! But how different in this respect were the institutions of *Moses*, which are, notwithstanding, said to be borrowed from them ! He made no distinction of *castes*, confining a man to the profession of his father, whether it suited him or not, and elevating some tribes to the degradation of others. In the *Hebrew* system there was, indeed, an hereditary priesthood, but in that one circumstance the resemblance terminates. The tribe to which the priesthood belonged, so far from being rich, was excluded from a share in the division of the land, and confined to certain cities with a small space round them for gardens, so that they were generally objects of charity, especially the common *Levites*; and their case is frequently mentioned together with that of the stranger, the fatherless, and widow, who were of course poor and destitute.

The principal part of the subsistence of the *Levites* was the tithes, with respect to which they were, of course, at the mercy of their countrymen ; and the payment of these tithes depended upon the attachment of the people to the law which enjoined the payment of them. Consequently, it operated as an obligation on the *priests and Levites* to instruct the people in the law, and preserve them in their adherence to it, which was declared to be their proper business. Accordingly, there is not in all their history one example of a *Hebrew* priest attaining much wealth or political influence in the country, before the *Babylonish* Captivity. And from the leaning which the people in general had to other religions, the priests of *Baal* were generally more popular than they. As to the criminal law, it was the very same to the priests and all the people.

So far were the *priests and Levites* from being enjoined to keep the people in ignorance, that certain times were expressly appointed on which they were to give them instruction with respect to the law ; and, therefore, *Moses*, in blessing each of the twelve tribes, says of the *Levites*, (*Deut.* xxxiii. 10,) “ They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law.” Every seven years they were obliged to read over the whole of the law at the feast of tabernacles, which they might easily do to the people assembled in groups for the purpose.

But besides this express provision for the instruction of the people, they were all, without exception, earnestly exhorted to study the law continually, and teach it to their children. *Deut.* vi. 6, 7 : “ These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart, and thou shalt teach them dili-

gently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."

There was no provision for a *king* in the original constitution of the *Hebrew* government, and the nation was solemnly warned against adopting that form of government; * yet *Moses*, foreseeing that they would have kings,† appointed that every king should, with his own hand, write a copy of the law; it being of particular consequence that he who was to administer the laws should be well acquainted with them.‡ Certainly, then, if the people in general were ignorant of their institutions, or neglected to observe them, the fault was not in the system itself.

SECTION XI.

Of the Prerogatives of the Kings.

IT is certainly no particular objection to the system of the *Hindoos* that their princes were arbitrary; because, excepting the single case of the *Hebrews*, all the governments in the *East* ever have been so; the princes appointing whom they pleased for their advisers or assistants, and taking their advice, and employing them as they thought proper. But it is, on the other hand, no recommendation of the system, that their laws, supposed to come immediately from the Supreme Being himself, favour that system, and that such an idea is given of them as must tend to feed the pride of kings, encourage them to oppress their subjects, and disturb the peace of their neighbours. Yet such is the necessary inference from the accounts of the power of kings and magistrates in their solemn codes.

"The magistrate," say the Pundits who compiled the *Code of Gentoo Laws*, "must not be considered as a mere man; even in the case of the magistrate being a child, he must still be looked upon in the light of the *Dewtâh*; in truth, the magistrate is the *Dewtâh* in a human form, born in this world."§ According to the *Institutes of Menu*, kings have a divine origin, separate from that of the rest of mankind. "The ruler of this *universe*," they say, "created a

* 1 Sam. viii. 9—18. See Vol. XI. p. 365.

† See, on *Deut.* xvii. 15, Vol. XI. p. 282, Note †.

‡ See, on *Deut.* xvii. 18, Vol. XI. p. 283.

§ *Pref.* p. cx. (P.)

king—forming him of eternal particles drawn from the substance of INDRA, PAVANA, YAMA, SU'RYA, of AGNI and VARUNA, of CHANDRA and CUVE'RA. And since a king was composed of particles drawn from those chief guardian deities, he consequently surpasses all mortals in glory. Like the sun, he burns eyes and hearts; nor can any human creature on earth even gaze on him. He is fire and air; he, both sun and moon; he, the god of criminal justice; he, the genius of wealth; he, the regent of waters; he, the lord of the firmament. A king, even though a child, must not be treated lightly, from an idea that he is a mere mortal: no; he is a powerful divinity, who appears in a human shape. Fire burns only one person who carelessly goes too near it; but the fire of a king in wrath burns a whole family, with all their cattle and goods.—He, sure, must be the perfect essence of majesty, by whose favour Abundance rises on her lotos, in whose valour dwells conquest, in whose anger, death.”*

The king is exhorted to act as the father of his people,† but he may assume an opposite character if he pleases. He “must appoint seven or eight ministers,‡ and having ascertained the several opinions of his counsellors, let him do what is most beneficial for him in public affairs.”§ But they could only advise. They had no power of controul. The king is, indeed, promised all prosperity if he acquit himself well, but they are such promises as the Supreme Being only can make good. Treating of good princes, it is said, that in their dominions “children are born in due season, and enjoy long lives. *There* the grain of husbandmen rises abundantly.—There no younglings die, nor is one deformed animal born.”|| If, however, this be the criterion of a well-governed kingdom, few, I apprehend, will be found to be so.

In like manner, every thing with which a bad prince is threatened is in the power of God only. “That king who, through weakness of intellect, rashly oppresses his people, will, together with his family, be deprived both of kingdom and life.”¶ “A king addicted—to vices arising from anger,

* *Instit.* p. 159. (P.) Ch. vii. 3—9, 11; *Jones*, VII. pp. 292, 293.

† *Instit.* p. 169. (P.) “Never to recede from combat, to protect the people, and to honour the priests, is the highest duty of kings, and insures their felicity.” Ch. vii. 88; *Jones*, VII. p. 306.

‡ “Who must be sworn *by touching a sacred image*.”

§ *Instit.* p. 166. (P.) Ch. vii. 54, 57; *Jones*, VII. pp. 300, 301.

|| *Instit.* p. 277. (P.) Ch. ix. 246, 247; *Jones*, VIII. p. 43.

¶ *Instit.* p. 173. (P.) Ch. vii. 111; *Jones*, VII. p. 309.

may lose even his life.”* But this is to be understood, according to the translator’s interlineation,† of the effects of “the public resentment,” and not from any regular power of controul, or of punishment.

The least interruption given to the pleasures of a prince exposes the offender to a most unreasonable punishment. “In any place,” say the *Gentoo Laws*, “where the magistrate is playing with any person at *Choperbázee*, or tables, or any other such kind of game; in that case, if any person, without permission of the magistrate, interposes with his hand, or by speaking, the magistrate shall put him to death.”‡

The emolument which a prince may derive from his office, independent of any exceeding, which would be called oppression, seems, according to the *Institutes of Menu*, to be very exorbitant. “By low handicraftsmen, artificers, and servile men, who support themselves by labour, the king may cause work to be done for a day in each month.”§ “Let the king take a twentieth part of the profit on sales.”|| “Of cattle, of gems, of gold and silver, *added each year to the capital stock*, a fiftieth part may be taken by the king; of grain an eighth part, a sixth, or a twelfth, *according to the difference of the soil, and the labour necessary to cultivate it*. He may also take a sixth part of the clear, annual increase of trees, flesh meat, honey, clarified butter, perfumes, medical substances, liquids, flowers, roots, and fruit; of gathered leaves, pot herbs, grass, utensils made with leather or cane, earthen pots, and all things made of stone.”¶ “Of the reward for what every subject reads in the *Véda*, for what he sacrifices, for what he gives in charity, for what he performs in worship, the king justly takes a sixth part, in consequence of protection.”** This is the more extraordinary, as it must be contributed by the *Bramins*.

In return, however, for this, besides the favour that the prince is requested to shew to the Bramins, as mentioned before, they share with him in many of the fines, and in some cases the king himself is subject to a fine, though it is not said who is to exact it. “Where another man of lower birth shall be fined one *pana*, the king shall be fined a thousand; and he shall give the fine to the priests, or cast

* *Instit.* p. 164. (P.) Ch. vii. 46; *Jones*, VII. p. 299.

† “The gloss of Culluca.” See *supra*, p. 219, Note §.

‡ *Gentoo Laws*, p. 269. (P.)

§ *Instit.* p. 176. (P.) Ch. vii. 138; *Jones*, VII. p. 313.

|| *Instit.* p. 240. (P.) Ch. viii. 398; *Jones*, VII. p. 395.

¶ *Instit.* p. 175. (P.) Ch. vii. 130—132; *Jones*, VII. pp. 312, 313.

** *Instit.* p. 228. (P.) Ch. viii. 305; *Jones*, VII. p. 380.

it into the river. This is a sacred rule.”* “Let no virtuous prince appropriate the wealth of a criminal in the highest degree.—Having thrown such a fine into the waters, let him offer it to VARUNA; or let him bestow it on some priest of eminent learning in the Scriptures.”†

Such is the conduct prescribed to the prince with respect to his own subjects. With regard to his neighbours, he is encouraged to get all he can from them, in order to enlarge his own territories, though, when he has acquired new subjects, he is advised to govern them well. M. *Langles*, the great encomiast of this system, quotes with approbation, from a *Hindoo* treatise on the art of government, the following passage, which would have been highly pleasing to *Alexander the Great*, *Jenghis Khan*, or *Tamerlane*: “He draws a tribute from those that are weaker than himself. He endeavours to sow dissension among the troops of those sovereigns whose power gives him umbrage, and may become fatal to him. Though the prince whose territories border on his seem to be his friend, he ought not to have the least confidence in him.”‡

The *Institutes of Menu* hold the same language: “By a king whose forces are always ready for action, the whole world may be kept in awe; let him then, by a force always ready, make all creatures living his own.”§ “Thus fully performing all duties required by the law, let a king seek” (*with justice*, as Sir William Jones || adds) “to possess regions yet unpossessed, and when they are in his possession, let him govern them well.”¶ But who is to controul him, if he does not?

M. *Langles* himself will hardly say that the *Hebrew* system was borrowed from this, or from any other form of government subsisting in the time of *Moses*. According to his constitution, there was not to be any king in Israel. The nation was to be governed ultimately by God, to whom they were directed to have recourse in all cases of great emergency, and ordinarily by a council of elders, or heads of the twelve tribes, their resolves being afterwards confirmed by the whole congregation, in what manner assembled we cannot tell; so that, in fact, the *Hebrew* form of government

* *Instit.* p. 232. (P.) Ch. viii. 336; *Jones*, VII. p. 385.

† *Instit.* p. 277. (P.) Ch. ix. 243, 244; *Jones*, VIII. p. 43.

‡ *Langles*, p. 54. (P.)

§ *Instit.* p. 172. (P.) Ch. vii. 103; *Jones*, VII. p. 308.

|| *The Gloss of Culluca.* See *supra*, p. 219, Note §.

¶ *Instit.* p. 278. (P.) Ch. ix. 251; *Jones*, VIII. p. 44.

consisted of three estates. When the heads of the tribes were assembled, it is probable that the *high-priest* presided, though this does not appear to have been necessary. The priests, as a body, were too much dispersed to be able to combine for any political purpose, nor does it appear that they ever attempted any thing of the kind, or that they were regarded with jealousy on that account. At one time, indeed, the *high-priest* protected the infant heir of the crown from the attempts of the queen mother to take his life; but as soon as he was of age he was made king.*

When the people, notwithstanding the earnest remonstrance of *Samuel*, by the direction of God himself, against their adopting a kingly government,† were resolved to be like their neighbours, in having a king, he was appointed by God, and not by the priests.‡ Before this change in the form of their government, the *Israelites* were governed on all extraordinary occasions, never by any priest, but always by a civil judge, whose office, if he acquitted himself well, seems in general to have been for life; but the ordinary administration of affairs did not require his interposition. In this respect the constitution of the *Hebrews* resembled that of the *Northern* nations of Europe, as described by *Tacitus*.§ No civil power, however, was hereditary.

SECTION XII.

Of the Situation of Women among the Hindoos.

I RATHER wonder that the respect which all Frenchmen profess to have for the *female sex*, should not have lowered *M. Langles's* high opinion of the *Hindoo* institutions; for, nothing can be more humiliating than the light in which women are always represented in them. He himself says, that, according to the *Vedas*, the souls of women, as well as those of all individuals of the inferior castes, are con-

* See 2 *Kings* xi. 4—12.

† See *supra*, p. 222.

‡ See 1 *Sam.* ix. 15, 16.

§ "Nec regibus infinita aut libera potestas.—De minoribus rebus, principes consultant, de majoribus, omnes: ita tamen, ut ea utroque, quorum penes plebem arbitrium est, apud principes pertractentur.—Rex vel princeps—audiuntur auctoritate suadenti magis quam jubendi potestate." *De Moribus Germ.* vii. xi. "Neither is the power of their kings unbounded or arbitrary.—Affairs of smaller moment the chiefs determine; about matters of higher consequence, the whole nation deliberates.—The king or chief—is heard rather from his ability to persuade, than from any authority to command." *Gordon*.

demned to continual transmigrations, till they are regenerated in the bodies of men.*

If the general character of women were such as the *Hindoo* writings exhibit, there is no supposition that can be entertained concerning them too unfavourable, nor any treatment of them too bad. In the *Heetopades*, translated by M. Langles, it is said, that "faithlessness, violence, falsehood, extreme avarice, a total want of good qualities, and impurity, are vices natural to the female sex."† And both the *Institutes of Menu* and the *Code of Gentoo Laws*, may be quoted as better authorities in support of the same opprobrious character, but certainly not the writings of *Moses*. "It is," say the *Institutes*, "the nature of women in this world to cause the seduction of men; for which reason the wise are never unguarded in the company of females."‡

The same character is given more at large in the following passage: "Through their passion for men, their mutable temper, their want of settled affection, and their perverse nature, (let them be guarded in this world ever so well,) they soon become alienated from their husbands; yet should their husbands be diligently careful in guarding them, though they well know the disposition with which the Lord of the creation formed them. MENU allotted to such women a love of their bed, of their seat, and of ornament, impure appetites, wrath, weak flexibility, desire of mischief, and bad conduct. Women have no business with the texts of the *Vêda*; thus is the law fully settled. Having, therefore, no evidence of law, and no knowledge of expiatory texts, sinful women must be as foul as falsehood itself; and this is a fixed rule. To this effect, many texts which may shew their true disposition are chaunted in the *Vêdas*."§

The *Gentoo Laws*, compiled by the learned *Pundits* of *Hindostan*, are in perfect unison with these *Institutes of Menu*. Of women they say something so gross, that I cannot copy it. What follows is bad enough: "Women have six qualities; the first an inordinate desire for jewels and fine furniture, handsome clothes, and nice victuals; the second, immoderate lust; the third, violent anger; the fourth, deep resentment, i. e. no person knows the senti-

* Langles, p. 179. (P.)

† Ibid. p. 95. (P.)

‡ *Instit.* p. 44. (P.) Ch. i. 213; *Jones*, VII. p. 146. Yet it is allowed, Ch. i. 240, that there may "be selected, from every quarter, women bright as gems;" possessing "knowledge, virtue, purity, gentle speech, and various liberal arts." *Ibid.* p. 150.

§ *Instit.* p. 247. (P.) Ch. ix. 15—19; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 3, 4.

ments concealed in their hearts ; the fifth, another person's good appears evil in their eyes ; the sixth, they commit bad actions."*

The souls of women must certainly have been very much depraved in a prior state to correspond to their character in this world ; and this is sufficiently intimated in the *Institutes of Menu*. Treating of the duties of a prince, they say, "Since those who are disgraced *in this life, by reason of their sins formerly committed*, are apt to betray secret counsel ; so are talking birds, and so above all are women : them he must, for that reason, diligently remove."† And yet, according to Mr. Holwell, women are "supposed to be animated by the most benign and least culpable of the apostate angels (*Debtah*)."‡

Such being, in the opinion of the *Hindoo* lawgivers, the natural character of women, it is no wonder that little regard is paid to their evidence in courts of justice. "One man untainted with covetousness, *and other vices*," say the *Institutes of Menu*, "may, *in some cases*, be the sole witness, and will have more weight than many women ; because female understandings are apt to waver."§

Neither can we be surprised that the birth of a female is no cause of rejoicing in a *Hindoo* family. If a wife bear only daughters, the husband may cease to cohabit with her. || In this case, according to the *Institutes of Menu*, a man, after waiting eleven years, may marry another. The same law says, that "she who speaks unkindly" to her husband, may be superseded by another "without delay."¶

It is in perfect agreement with these ideas of the female character, that women must always be under the absolute controul of men. "By a girl," say the *Institutes of Menu*, "or by a young woman, or by a woman advanced in years, nothing must be done, even in her own dwelling-place, according to her mere pleasure.—A woman must never seek independence.—A woman is never fit for independence."** "A man, both day and night, must keep his wife so much in subjection, that she by no means be mistress of her own actions. If the wife have her own free

* *Gentoo Laws*, p. 250. (P.)

† *Instit.* p. 178. (P.) Ch. vii. 150 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 315.

‡ *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 75. (P.)

§ *Instit.* p. 199. (P.) Ch. viii. 77 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 342.

|| *Gentoo Laws*, p. 251. (P.)

¶ *Instit.* p. 255. (P.) Ch. ix. 81 ; *Jones*, VIII. p. 14.

** *Instit.* pp. 141, 142, 245. (P.) Ch. v. 147, 148, ix. 3 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 269 ; VIII. p. 1.

will, notwithstanding she be sprung from a superior caste, she yet will behave amiss.”*

The subjection of a wife to her husband has no bounds: “A wife must always rise before her husband, but never eat with him.—She must not dress, or take any amusement in his absence.”† “Though inobservant of approved usages, or enamoured of another woman, or devoid of good qualities, yet a husband must constantly be revered as a god by a virtuous wife.—A faithful wife, who wishes to attain in heaven the mansion of her husband, must do nothing unkind to him, be he living or dead.—Let her emaciate her body by living voluntarily on pure flowers, roots, and fruits; but let her not, when her lord is deceased, even pronounce the name of another man.”‡ In this case, surely she might be allowed a mansion in heaven, equal to that of her husband; but much more than this is required, if she would make sure of so great a happiness, even to be burned alive with his corpse. Whether she do this or not, she must not on any account marry again.§ “The marriage of a widow,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, is not “even named in the laws concerning marriage. This practice, fit only for cattle, is reprehended by learned *Bráhmens*.”||

In one case, however, a woman is allowed the liberty of disposing of herself. “Three years let a damsel wait, though

* *Gentoo Laws*, p. 249. (P.)

† *Ibid.* pp. 250, 251, 253. (P.) “A woman who always acts according to her husband’s pleasure, and speaks no ill of any person, and who can herself do all such things as are proper for a woman, and who is of good principles, and who produces a son, and who rises from sleep before her husband, such a woman is found only by much and many religious works, and by a peculiarly happy destiny; such a woman if any man forsakes of his own accord, the magistrate shall inflict upon that man the punishment of a thief.

“A woman who dissipates or spoils her own property, or who procures abortion, or who has an intention to murder her husband, and is always quarrelling with every body, and who eats before her husband eats, such a woman shall be turned out of the house.

“When a woman, whose husband is absent on a journey, has expended all the money that he gave her, to support her in victuals and clothes during his absence; or if her husband went on a journey without leaving any thing with her to support her expenses, she shall support herself by painting, by spinning, or some other such employment.

“If a man goes on a journey, his wife shall not divert herself by play, nor shall she see any public show, nor shall laugh, nor shall dress herself in jewels and fine clothes, nor shall see dancing, nor hear music, nor shall sit in the window, nor shall ride out, nor shall behold any thing choice and rare; but shall fasten well the house-door, and remain private; and shall not eat any dainty victuals, and shall not blacken her eyes with eye-powder, and shall not view her face in a mirror; she shall never exercise herself in any such agreeable employment during the absence of her husband.” *Ibid.*

‡ *Instit.* p. 142. (P.) Ch. v. 154, 156, 157; *Jones*, VII. p. 270.

§ See Sect. xv. *infra*.

|| *Instit.* p. 253. (P.) Ch. ix. 65, 66; *Jones*, VIII. p. 12.

she be marriageable, but after that term, let her choose for herself a bridegroom of equal rank.”*

Though obedience be so rigorously required of a wife, it is not to go unrewarded. “She who deserts not her lord, but keeps in subjection to him her heart, her speech, and her body, shall attain his mansion in heaven, and by the virtuous in this world be called *Sádhewi, good and faithful*. But a wife by disloyalty to her husband,” shall “incur disgrace in this life, and be born *in the next* from the womb of a Shakal, or be tormented with horrible diseases which punish vice.”†

When women are considered in this degrading light, and treated in this disrespectful manner, especially as not qualified to read their sacred books, it is no wonder that they are in general very ignorant, and perhaps undeserving of the confidence that is never reposed in them. “There are few Hindoo women to be found who can either read or write.”‡

How much more consonant to reason is the doctrine of our Scriptures concerning the two sexes! According to them, the man has no advantage besides that superiority which must be given to one of them. In every other respect, they are considered and treated as perfectly equal. They have the same moral duties, and the same future reward in prospect, in a state in which all distinction of sex will cease, where there will be *no marrying or giving in marriage, but all will be alike, as the angels of God in heaven*. (*Matt.* xxii. 30.) As to the natural or moral disposition, there is no intimation in the Scriptures or the writings of *Moses*, of women being at all inferior to men. Both have their natural passions, but neither of them are considered as more disposed to criminal indulgence than the other. And with respect to examples, there are virtuous and excellent ones of women as well as of men. If some of the most shining characters be those of men, so are also some of the worst. And women being naturally more domestic, and coming less into public life, their characters and conduct are not in general so conspicuous, and of course not so much noticed in history as those of men.

* *Instit.* p. 256. (*P.*) Ch. ix. 90; *Jones*, VIII. p. 16.

† *Instit.* p. 249. (*P.*) Ch. ix. 29, 30; *Jones*, VIII. p. 6.

‡ *Sketches*, II. p. 47. (*P.*) Such, when Dr. Priestley wrote, or a very few years before, were a large majority of both sexes in England. Happily, to improve their condition, in this respect, is now become fashionable; though there may still be a few who *meanly seek the blessing to confine*. These are not unjustly alarmed lest an educated *populace*, which cannot be even *sabred* into disorder and outrage, should, at length, successfully claim their share in the election of a Legislature, which affects to represent the *people*.

SECTION XIII.

Of the Devotion of the Hindoos.

THERE is, no doubt, something sublime, though extravagant and absurd, in the professed object of the *Hindoo* devotion, which is the detachment of the soul from every thing corporeal, and its union to the Supreme Being, from which it had its origin ; and it is possible that, by the force of imagination, some persons may believe that they have attained to this exalted state. According to the *Institutes of Menu*, “ he who frequently performs interested rites attains an equal station with the regents of the lower heavens ; but he who frequently performs disinterested acts of religion becomes for ever exempt from *a body, composed of the five elements*. Equally perceiving the Supreme Soul in all beings, and all beings in the Supreme Soul, he sacrifices his own spirit by fixing it on the spirit of God, and approaches the nature of that sole Divinity who shines by his own effulgence.”*

This intense devotion the *Hindoos* suppose to comprise all other duties. “ In this life, as well as the next, the study of the *Véda* to acquire the knowledge of God, is held the most efficacious of those six duties in procuring felicity to man. For, in the knowledge and adoration of one God, which the *Véda* teaches, all the rules of good conduct—are fully comprised.”†

This union with God here, they think leads to the final absorption into his essence hereafter. “ The man who perceives in his own soul the Supreme Soul, present in all creatures, acquires equanimity toward them all, and shall be absorbed at last in the highest essence, even that of the Almighty himself.”‡

This idea of the effect of mere contemplation to raise the soul to a state of union with God, supposed to be the highest attainment of man here or hereafter, led to all the practices of the Christian monks, who in fact only copied the *Heathen Platonists*, whose notions were derived from an *Oriental* source. Unhappily, this state of the extraordinary exalta-

* *Instit.* p. 357. (P.) Ch. xii. 90, 91; *Jones*, VIII. p. 144.

† *Instit.* p. 356. (P.) Ch. xii. 86, 87; *Jones*, VIII. p. 143.

‡ *Instit.* p. 362 (P.) Ch. xii. 125; *Jones*, VIII. p. 151.

tion of the soul was supposed to be effected not by any thing that deserves to be called devotion, but by certain practices and ceremonies, which have no connexion whatever with real devotion or virtue; by which I mean the due government of the passions, and consequently a proper conduct in life. With the *Hindoos* this abstraction from all sensible objects, and the union of the soul with God, ends in nothing but a stupid apathy and insensibility, and that in general only affected; as it leaves them a prey to some of the worst passions of human nature.

What the *Hindoos* call *prayer*, and suppose to be so efficacious, is nothing that *Jews* or *Christians* signify by that term. It is no proper address to the Supreme Being, expressive of the sentiments of humility, veneration, and submission, but the mere repetition of certain words, the pronounciation of which can only be supposed to operate like a charm. Nay, we are told that “the worshippers of *Vichnou* pretend that his name, though pronounced without any determinate motive, or even in contempt, cannot fail to produce a good effect. This alone, they say, has the power of effacing all crimes.”*

“The sum of the *Hindoo* devotion,” Mr. Lord says, “consists in the repetition of certain names of God, dilated and explained.”† The first thing in their prayer, is “to pronounce the word *ôum*, then excluding all sensible objects, even forbearing to breathe, and to think only on God.—Prayer thus made,” they say, “serves for the pardon of sin and purification.”‡

This word *oum*, or *aum*, or *om*, on the pronounciation of which so much is supposed to depend, signifies, according to Sir William Jones, “*VICHNU, SIVA, BRAHMA*’;” or the three powers of creation, preservation, and destruction. It forms, he says, “a mystical word, which never escapes the lips of a pious *Hindu*, who meditates on it in silence. Perhaps,” he adds, “it is the Egyptian *ON*, which is com-

* *L' Ezour-Védam*, II. p. 88, Note. (P.) “Les adorateurs de *Vichnou* prétendent, que son nom, quoique prononcé sans aucun motif déterminé, et même dans l'intention de mépriser, ou de se moquer de ce Dieu, ne laisse pas que de produire un bon effet. Ce nom seul a, selon eux, le pouvoir d'effacer tous les crimes. (*Bagavad.*) Etranges pratiques!” very naturally exclaims the French Editor, “maximes funestes! La superstition outrage tout-à-la-fois la Divinité, et renverse l'édifice des mœurs.” *Ibid.*

† *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, p. 59.

‡ *L' Ezour-Védam*, I. pp. 287, 288. (P.) “D'abord on prononcera le mot *ôum*; puis rappelant tous ses sens, sans les laisser égarer nulle part, retenant même la respiration, qu'on ne lâchera que de tems en tems, on pensera à la Divinité.—La prière ainsi faite, sert à obtenir le pardon de ses péchés et à se purifier.” *Ibid.*

monly supposed to mean the sun," and by the ancient idolaters the solar fire.* Though this mystical word, together with many others, of which a similar use is made, cannot but be well known, the Bramins pretend to make a great secret of it. "Their prayers," says the translator of *L' Ezour-Védam*, "consist in often repeating letters and syllables full of energy, many times, and the Bramins teach them to their disciples, by whispering in their ear, and recommending inviolable secrecy."†

This is confirmed in the *Institutes of Menu*. "The primary triliteral syllable, in which the three *Védas* themselves are comprised, must be kept secret, as another triple *Véda*: he knows the *Véda* who distinctly knows the mystick sense of that word."‡ This word is often used together with the *gayatri*, which the editors of the *Gentoo Laws* call "*Goiteree*, a *Gentoo* incantation,"§ the mention of which occurs so often in the *Institutes of Menu*, and which is supposed to have the greatest efficacy in the pretended second birth. "Such is the advantageous privilege of those who have a double birth, from their natural mothers, and from the *Gáyatrî*, their spiritual mother."||

The following curious circumstances must be attended to with respect to this word, and others of peculiar efficacy, as prescribed in the *Institutes of Menu*. Treating of the duties of the Bramin, it is said, "If he have sitten on culms of *cusá*, with their points towards the East, and be purified by rubbing that holy grass on both his hands, and be further prepared by three suppressions of breath, each equal in time to five short vowels he then may fitly pronounce *óm*. BRAHMA milked out from the three *Védas* the letter A, the letter U, and the letter M, which form by their coalition the triliteral monosyllable, together with three mysterious words *bhur*, *bhuvah*, *swer*, or earth, sky, heaven.—A priest who shall know the *Véda*, and shall pronounce to himself both morning and evening that syllable, and that holy text, preceded by the three words, shall attain the sanctity which the *Véda* confers. And a twice-born man who shall a thousand times repeat those three (or *óm*, the *vyáhrítis*, and the

* *Dissert. on Asia*, I. pp. 33, 61. (P.)

† *Eclairciss.* II. p. 240. (P.) "Ces prières ne consistent souvent qu'en des lettres et des syllables pleines d'énigmes qu'on répète plusieurs fois. Les Brames les enseignent à leurs disciples, en les leur soufflant tous bas à l'oreille, et en leur recommandant un secret inviolable." *Ibid.*

‡ *Instit.* p. 343. (P.) Ch. xi. 266; *Jones*, VIII. p. 128.

§ *Glossary*, in *Pref.*, p. lxxxii. (P.)

|| *Instit.* p. 357. (P.) Ch. xii. 93 *Jones*, VIII. p. 144.

gáyatrî) apart from the multitude, shall be released in a month even from a great offence, as a snake from his slough. —The three great immutable words, preceded by the trilateral syllable, and followed by the *gáyatrî*, which consists of three measures, must be considered as the mouth or principal part of the *Véda*. Whoever shall repeat day by day for three years, without negligence, that sacred text, shall hereafter approach the Divine essence, move as freely as air, and assume an ethereal form.—All rites ordained in the *Véda*, oblations to fire, and solemn sacrifices, pass away; but that which passes not away is declared to be the syllable *óm*, thence called *acshara*; since it is a symbol of GOD, the Lord of created beings.”*

According to other accounts, the prayers of the *Hindoos* consist not merely in silent meditation on this word, or any others, but in the actual repeated pronunciation of it, together with some others. *La Croze* says, the constant prayer of some of them is *Ohmhamo Naräiana*.† He also says the religion of others consists in repeating a form of prayer which consists of five letters or syllables, which they have constantly in their mouths, viz. *Nama Tchiväia*,‡ which signifies *Blessed be Tchiven*.

The devotional ceremony called *Sandavana*, which is performed by the *Bramins* every day, is as follows: At sun-rise they fetch water from a pond in the hollow of their hand. This they throw sometimes before and sometimes behind them, or over their shoulder, invoking *Brahma*, and pronouncing his praises. They then throw some of the water towards the sun, and conclude with bathing.§

That curious traveller *Pietro della Valle* gives the following general account of the worship of the *Hindoos*: “Lights being set up in all the temples, and the usual music of drums and pipes sounding, I saw in one temple, which was none of the greatest, a minister or priest dance before the idol all naked, save that he had a small piece of linen over his privities, as many of them continually go. He had a drawn sword in his hand, which he flourished as

* *Instit.* pp. 27, 28. (P.) Ch. i. 75, 76, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84; *Jones*, VII. pp. 123—125.

† *Histoire*, II. p. 279. (P.) “C’est-à-dire, *béni soit Vistnou* sous le nom de *Naräien*.” *Ibid.* (Signifying, *Blessed be Vistnou*, under the name of *Naräien*.)

‡ *Ibid.* (P.) “Persuadés que par ces pratiques ils obtiendront le salut éternel.” *Ibid.* (Believing that, thus, they shall obtain eternal salvation.)

§ *Sonnerat*, I. p. 252. (P.) “Ils en jettent ensuite au soleil pour lui témoigner leur respect et leur reconnaissance de ce qu’il a bien voulu reparoitre, et chasser les ténèbres; puis ils achèvent de se purifier par le bain.” *Ibid.*

if he had been fencing, but his motions were nothing but lascivious gestures. And, indeed, the greatest part of their worship of their gods consists in nothing but music, songs, dances, not only pleasant, but lascivious, and in serving their idols as if they were living persons, viz. in presenting to them things to eat, washing them, perfuming them, giving them *Betlè*-leaves, dying them with sanders, carrying them abroad in procession, and such other things as the country people account delights and observances.”*

Can any person think this kind of worship comparable to the decent and solemn worship of the *Hebrew* temple, in which the truly sublime and, in every sense of the word, *devotional* Psalms of *David* were sung; compositions expressive of every sentiment that becomes men with respect to their Creator, Benefactor, and Moral Governor; always represented as a being omnipresent, of spotless purity, universal benevolence and mercy, together with the strictest justice; not needing the aid of any inferior beings; his own eyes being “in every place, beholding the evil and the good,” (*Prov.* xv. 3,) and seeing even the inmost recesses of the heart, with a view to regard all men according to their works; not the alternately waking and sleeping God of the *Hindoos*, or served in so stupid a manner, but by truly pious affections, and active services to mankind?

Much of the religion of the *Hindoos* consists in oblations to the gods, by which is never meant the Supreme Being, the only object of the *Hebrew* worship, but the inferior deities, and to the *manes* of their ancestors, of which the Hebrews had no ideas at all; and much ceremony, and a superstitious attention to many trifling circumstances, accompanies those acts of religion. The following are some of them, as prescribed in the *Institutes of Menu*: “Rice taken up, but not supported by both hands, the malevolent *Asuras* quickly rend into pieces.” In making offerings to the *manes*, “let him at no time drop a tear; let him on no account be angry; let him say nothing false; let him not touch the eatables with his foot; let him not even shake the dishes. A tear sends the messes to the restless ghosts; anger, to foes; falsehood, to dogs; contact with his foot, to demons; agitation, to sinners.—Let all the dressed food be very hot; and let the *Bráhmens* eat it in silence; nor let them declare the qualities of the food, even though asked

* *Travels*, p. 137. (P.)

by the giver. As long as the messes continue warm, as long as they eat it in silence, so long as the qualities of the food are not declared by them, so long the *manes* feast on it.”*

The following also are among the rules relating to the oblations to the *manes*, who seem to be as much respected as the gods to whom they usually sacrifice; from which it may be inferred that those gods are of no very high rank. “Mere water offered with faith to the progenitors of men, in vessels of silver, or adorned with silver, proves the source of incorruption. An oblation by *Bráhmens* to their ancestors transcends an oblation to the deities; because that to the deities is considered as the opening and completion of that to ancestors. — Let an offering to the gods be made at the beginning and end of the *sráddha*. It must not begin and end with an offering to ancestors. For he who begins and ends it with an oblation to the *Pitris*, quickly perishes with his progeny.”†

The ceremonies used by the people of *Malabar* during what they call prayer are said to be excessively tedious. “Sometimes the greatest part of a day is taken up” with them, “for they must be regularly and perfectly done, and by no means abridged or hindered not even by the king’s presence.”‡

The *Parsis* are no less superstitious in their prayers. “A *Parsi*,” says Mr. Richardson, “cannot even pare his nails, or cut his hair, without hundreds of unmeaning prayers, and the most tedious and ridiculous observances. But every omission” of them, he adds, “is gainful to the priests; for absolution must be purchased; and a fine is the indispensable consequence of the most minute and involuntary failure.”§

The reading and teaching of the *Vedas* is attended with as many superstitious observances by the *Hindoos* as their prayers; and for the following curious particulars we have the first authority, viz. the *Institutes of Menu*, which I shall therefore literally copy; and they are only some of the necessary attentions that are required on the occasion. We even find by Sir William Jones’ account above-mentioned, [p. 232,] that the reading of the *Institutes of Menu*, from which

* *Instit.* pp. 80—82. (*P.*) Ch. iii. 225, 229, 230, 236, 237; *Jones*, VII. pp. 190—192.

† *Instit.* p. 78. (*P.*) Ch. iii. 202, 203, 205; *Jones*, VII. p. 187.

‡ *Phillips’s Account*, pp. 5, 6. (*P.*)

§ *Dissert. on Eastern Nations*, pp. 26, 27. (*P.*)

these extracts are taken, requires the same or similar attentions.

“ A *Bráhmén*, beginning and ending a lecture on the *Véda* must always pronounce to himself the syllable *óm*; for unless the syllable *óm* precede, his learning will slip away from him; and unless it follow, nothing will be long retained.”* “ The reading of such as wish to attain the excellent reward of virtue, must continually be suspended in towns and in cities, and always where an offensive smell prevails. In a district through which a corpse is carried, and in the presence of an unjust person, the reading of the scripture must cease; and while the sound of weeping is heard; and in a promiscuous assembly of men. In water, near midnight, and while the two natural excretions are made, or with a remnant of food in the mouth, or when the *sráddha* has recently been eaten, let no man even meditate in his heart *on the holy texts*. A learned *Bráhmén* having received an invitation to the obsequies of a single ancestor, must not read the *Véda* for three days; nor when the king has a son born, nor when the dragon’s head causes an eclipse. As long as the scent and unctuousness of perfumes remain on the body of a learned priest, who has partaken of an entertainment, so long he must abstain from pronouncing the texts of the *Véda*. Let him not read lolling on a couch, nor with his feet raised on a bench, nor with his thighs crossed, nor having lately swallowed meat, or the rice and other food *given* on the birth or death of a relation; nor in a cloud of dust, nor while arrows whiz, *or a lute sounds*, nor in either of the twilights; nor at the conjunction, nor on the fourteenth day, nor at the opposition, nor on the eighth day of the moon. The dark lunar day destroys the spiritual teacher; the fourteenth destroys the learner; the eighth and the day of the full moon destroy *all remembrance of scripture*; for which reasons he must avoid reading on those lunar days. Let no *Bráhmén* read while dust falls like a shower, nor while the quarters of the firmament are inflamed, nor while skakals yell, nor while dogs bark or yelp, nor while asses or camels bray, nor while men in company chatter.—Never let him read on horseback; nor on a tree; nor on an elephant; nor in a boat; nor on an ass; nor on a camel; nor standing on barren ground; nor borne in a carriage;—nor with an indigestion, nor after vomiting, nor with sour eructations, nor while the wind vehemently blows.—If a beast used in agriculture, a frog,

* *Instit.* p. 26. (P.) Ch. ii. 74; *Jones*, VII. p. 123.

a cat, a dog, a snake, an ichneumon, or a rat, pass between *the lecturer and his pupil*, let him know that the lecture must be intermitted for a day and a night. Knowing this *collection of rules*, let the learned read the *Véda* on every *lawful* day, having first repeated in order the pure essence of the three *Védas*, viz. the *pranava*, the *vyáhritis*, and the *gáyatrî*.”*

Let, now, all the books of *Moses* be perused with the most prejudiced eye, nothing like any of these ridiculous observances will be found in them. Otherwise, when certain forms were prescribed in sacrificing, to prevent confusion, such whimsical observances as those above-mentioned might have been introduced. For why should the *Israelites* be more free from them than other nations, when they were equally ignorant; and superstition has always prevailed in proportion to ignorance? And though we may not be able, at this distance of time, to see the reasons for all the observances prescribed to the *Hebrews*, yet there is nothing in any of them so apparently absurd, but that it may well be supposed there *was* a good reason for it at the time of their institution. Their mere opposition to such absurd customs as universally prevailed in the Heathen world, so as to render the two modes of worship incompatible with one another, would alone be a good reason for the appointment of any particular rite.† For the great object of the religion of the *Hebrews* was, to preserve in that nation, and from them to diffuse through the world, the knowledge and worship of the true God, and thereby to counteract the polytheism and idolatry which then universally prevailed, and more especially in nations the most famed for superior wisdom and civilization.

How came this one inconsiderable nation, and no other, to escape the universal contagion? It was not from any want of natural propensity to it, as appears plainly enough in the whole course of their history. The controul of that propensity, therefore, must have come from some other source than themselves, and could only have been from God.

* *Instit.* pp. 102—105. (P.) Ch. iv. 107—115, 120—122, 125, 126; *Jones*, VII. pp. 219—222.

† “Ce but de Moïse étoit d’assurer, contre toutes les révolutions des temps, la durée de sa nation, et la pureté du culte qu’il venoit de lui donner. Dans cette vue, il falloit attacher fortement les Hébreux à leur religion: et c’est ce qu’il opère de la manière la plus efficace, par cette multitude d’observances qu’il leur impose.

“Pour parvenir plus sûrement à ce but, il falloit encore tenir tous les individus de la nation étroitement unis entr’eux, et séparés de tous les autres peuples. Or, quoi de plus capable de produire cet effet, que ces observances singulières, et toutes ces pratiques différentes de celles des autres nations, ou diamétralement opposées à leurs usages?” *Lettres de quelques Juifs.* A Paris, An. xiii. 1805, I. pp. 245, 246.

SECTION XIV.

Of the Restrictions of the Hindoos and other Ancient Nations with respect to Food.

A GREAT part of the religion of the *Hindoos*, as of that of all other ancient Heathen nations, consists in the austerities to which they subject themselves. By means of these, joined with contemplation, and such devotion as has been described, they imagine they promote the purification of the soul, and prepare it for its reunion to the Supreme Being. But the *Hindoos* go far beyond the rest of mankind in voluntary restrictions and mortifications.

The great maxim on which this system of austerity is built is thus expressed in the *Institutes of Menu*: “A man, by the attachment of his organs to sensual pleasure, incurs certain guilt; but having wholly subdued them, he thence attains heavenly bliss.”*

Among the lightest restrictions to which the Heathens have subjected themselves is the celibacy of some of their priests. But this is not the case of the Bramins, though “it is with the *Lamas* of *Tibet*,”† and also of the priests of BUDDOU and SOMMONO-KODOM, who however may quit the order, and then marry whenever they please.‡ They are also of no particular tribe, but are chosen out of the body of the people.

But restrictions with respect to eating and drinking are numerous with the *Hindoos*; and not being, like those of the *Hebrews*, founded on any rational system, must be very inconvenient; and these restrictions affect all the classes except the lowest. Among other things, all fermented or spirituous liquors are forbidden. “Inebriating liquor shall not be tasted by the chief of the twice-born.”§

The reason why the liquor which we call *rack*, a spirit distilled from rice, is not allowed, is particularly curious, as given in the *Institutes of Menu*: “Since the spirit of rice is *distilled from* the mala, or filthy refuse of the grain; and since mala is also a name for sin, let no *Bráhmén*, *Cshatriya*, or *Vaisya* drink that spirit.”|| Wine was thought to have in

* *Instit.* p. 29. (P.) Ch. ii. 93; *Jones*, VII. p. 126.

† *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 172. (P.) ‡ *Ibid.* p. 27. (P.)

§ *Instit.* p. 320. (P.) Ch. xi. 95; *Jones*, VIII. p. 98.

|| *Instit.* p. 320. (P.) Ch. xi. 94; *Jones*, VIII. p. 98.

it something of a pestiferous nature by the *Egyptians*, as having come, not from God, but from some evil genius. All the *Eastern* sages had the same idea. It was the opinion of the *Magi*, and the ancient *Arabs*, from whom it was adopted by *Mahomet*.* The prohibition of wine is among the precepts of *Fo*.†

In the laws of *Moses*, the use of wine is only forbidden to the priests during their attendance in the sanctuary, and to those who, for what time they pleased, took upon themselves the vow of the *Nazarites*. It was, however, understood by the *Jews*, that the priests, even during their officiating in the sanctuary, were only forbidden to take so much wine as could intoxicate them; and this was evidently to prevent any indecency in the public worship. At other times the priests as well as other *Israelites*, were allowed a moderate use of that valuable beverage. The *Psalmist* very properly expresses his gratitude to God for it, as that which "maketh glad the heart of man." (*Psalms* civ. 15.) *Lemuel*, in the book of *Proverbs*, with good reason says, (*Prov.* xxvi. 6,) "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine to those that be of heavy hearts." And *Paul* advises *Timothy*, (1 *Ep.* v. 23,) not to confine himself to *water*, but to use a little wine for *his* stomach's-sake and often infirmities."

Those of the *Hindoos* who are subject to the most restrictions with respect to diet are the *Bramins*, which shews that this system was not altogether founded on priestcraft, but was the result of speculation and serious opinion. The following are the instructions of *Menu* on the subject: "Garlick, onions, leeks and mushrooms, (which no twice-born man must eat,) and all vegetables raised in dung, red gums, or resins, exuding from trees, and juices from wounded stems, the fruit *sélu*, and the thickened milk of a cow within ten days after her calving, a priest must avoid with great care." As also "rice-pudding boiled with *tila*, frumenty, rice milk, and baked bread, which have not been first offered to some deity; flesh meat also, the food of gods, and clarified butter, which have not first been touched while holy texts were recited." They are also forbidden "the milk of a camel, or any quadruped with a hoof not cloven, that of an ewe, or that of a cow in heat, or whose calf is dead, or absent from her; that of any forest beast, except the buffalo,

* See *Jablonski*, I. pp. 131—134. (P.)

† *Modern Universal History*, VIII. p. 114. (P.)

the milk of a woman, and any thing naturally sweet, but acidulated, must all be carefully shunned. But among such acids, butter-milk may be swallowed, and every preparation of butter-milk, and all acids extracted from pure flowers, roots or fruit, *not cut with iron*. Let every twice-born man avoid carnivorous birds, and such as live in towns,—the sparrow,—the breed of the town cock,—web-footed birds,—and those which dive to devour fish: let him avoid meat kept at a slaughter-house, and dried meat.—He who eats the flesh of any animal is called the eater of that animal itself; and a fish eater is an eater of all flesh; from fish, therefore, he must diligently abstain. Yet the two fishes called *pát'hína* and *róhita* may be eaten *by the guests*, when offered at a repast in the house of the gods, or the manes.—The twice-born man, who has intentionally eaten a mushroom, the flesh of a tame hog, or a town cock, a leek, or an onion, or garlick, is degraded immediately.”* The *Gentoo Laws* also say, that “if a *Bramin* voluntarily eats onions or garlick, the magistrate shall banish such *Bramin* from the kingdom.”†

The same restrictions are not observed by other sects. “A cow may be eaten in Siam, and the Siamese sometimes kill animals which are most respected in Hindostan.”‡ The priests of BUDDOU and SOMMONO-KODOM “eat flesh, but will not kill the animal.”§

To a genuine *Hindoo* nothing appears more heinous than the killing, and much more the eating, of any thing that had life. “Not a mortal,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “exists more sinful than he, who, without an oblation to the manes or the Gods, desires to enlarge his own flesh with the flesh of another creature.”||

The *Hindoo* lawgivers suppose that sometimes the desire to eat animal food may be almost irresistible. In this case there is the following curious provision in the *Institutes of Menu*: Should a priest “have an earnest desire to taste flesh meat, he may gratify his fancy by forming the image of some beast, with clarified butter thickened, or he may

* *Instit.* p. 133. (P.) Ch. v. 5—13, 15, 16, 19; *Jones*, VII. pp. 245—248.

† *Gentoo Laws*, p. 261. (P.)

‡ *L'Ezour-Védam (Obser. Prélim.)*, I. p. 57. (P.) “On peut manger à *Siam* de la chair de vache, et on y tue quelquefois des animaux les plus respectés dans l'Indostan.” *Ibid.*

§ *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 28. (P.)

|| *Instit.* p. 129. (P.) Ch. v. 52; *Jones*, VII. p. 253.

form it with dough ; but never let him indulge a wish to kill any beast in vain.”*

The following penalty for killing and eating any animal must be sufficient to deter any person who can believe that it will be inflicted. Others, the threatening will affect in a different manner : “ As many hairs as grow on the beast, so many similar deaths shall the slayer of it, for his own satisfaction in this world, endure in the next, from birth to birth.” But then the reward for the strict observance of the injunction is likewise very great : “ He who injures no animated creature shall attain without hardship whatever he thinks of, whatever he strives for, whatever he fixes his mind on.”†

Notwithstanding these prohibitions, the sacrifice of animals having been practised from time immemorial, and also the partaking by the worshippers of what was thus given to the gods ; even the Hindoos make an exception to their rule in this case : “ On a solemn offering to a guest, at a sacrifice, and in holy rites to the manes, or to the Gods, but on those occasions only, may cattle be slain : this law Menu enacted.”‡ In the idea of the Hindoos, cattle were originally created for this sole purpose, and in their opinion much more depends upon it than, without particular information from the highest authority, we should have suspected. “ By the Self-existing in person,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “ were beasts created for sacrifice ; and the sacrifice *was ordained* for the increase of this universe : the slaughter therefore of beasts for sacrifice is in truth no slaughter.”§ F. Bouchet also says, that though the Bramins are not allowed to eat meat, they are obliged to eat it at a sacrifice called *Ethiam*, when a sheep is killed, and they divide it among themselves.”||

Other ancient nations, and especially the *Egyptians*,

* *Instit.* p. 127. (P.) Ch. v. 37 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 251.

† *Instit.* pp. 127, 129. (P.) Ch. v. 38, 47 ; *Jones*, VII. pp. 251, 252.

‡ *Instit.* p. 128. (P.) Ch. v. 41 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 251.

§ *Instit.* p. 128. (P.) Ch. v. 39 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 251.

|| *Rel. Cer.* p. 382. [*Picart*, 1731, III. p. 403.] Mr. Holwell, however, says, (Pt. ii. p. 84,) that originally the *Hindoo*s “ were strangers to bloody sacrifices and offerings ; neither of the *Gentoo Bhades* having the least allusion to that mode of worshipping the Deity ; and the *Bramins* say, nothing but *Moisasoore* himself could have invented so infatuated and cruel an institution, which is manifestly so repugnant to the true spirit of devotion, and abhorrent to the eternal ONE.” This is so directly contrary to every other authority, and so improbable in itself, as all other nations without a single exception sacrificed animals, that I have no doubt of its being a mistake of this writer, who yet had the means of the best information. (P.)

whose institutions and customs are perhaps of as great antiquity as those of the *Hindoos*, laid themselves under various superstitious restrictions with respect to food. *Herodotus* says, the *Egyptians* neither sowed nor ate beans, nor would they taste the head of any animal.* In this, according to *Plutarch*, they were imitated by the *Romans*, who also, when they were purified, abstained from pulse.† The *Egyptians*, he also says, ate no flesh “of sheep and swine,” nor, “in the time of their purifications,” did they eat salt.‡ They considered the sea as the excrement of Typhon, and even of the world, and held the sea, and sea salt, in abomination, though they would use rock salt. For this reason they had a dislike to fish.§ According to *Juvenal* they never ate any animals that bore wool, any more than onions and leeks.

Porrum et cepe nefas violare, ac frangere morsu.

—— *lanatis animalibus abstinet omnis*

Mensa. Nefas illiæ factum jugulare capellæ.||

All the *Egyptians*, however, did not observe the same rules of diet. Some of them, *Herodotus* says, abstained from some kinds of sea-fish, and others from other kinds.¶ Some would eat none that were caught with a hook, lest it should have touched a pike, which they thought would pollute it. The people of *Syene* abstained from the *sea-bream*,** and the priests from all fish.†† The *Syrians* had the same objection to fish. *Plutarch*, in his treatise *Of Superstition*, says, “the superstitious believe that if a man taste of a *Minnow* or *Bleak*, the *Syrian* goddess will eat through his shins, fill his body with sores, and dissolve his liver.”‡‡ *Pythagoras*, he also says, ate no fish.

The most probable reason that I have met with for the dislike which the *Egyptians* had to onions and beans, and also to wool in garments, may be collected from *Plutarch's* treatise *De Iside et Osiride*. Having a prejudice against

* *Euterpe* (L. ii.), xxxii. (P.)

† *Roman Questions*. (P.) Q. 95; *Morals*, II. Pt. v. pp. 67, 68.

‡ *De Iside et Osiride*. (P.) *Morals*, IV. p. 69.

§ *Jablonski*. (P.) || *Sat.* xv. L. 9, 11, 12. (P.)

¶ *Euterpe* (L. ii.), xxxvii.

** “Because it is observed to appear with the approaching overflow of the Nile, and to present itself a voluntary messenger of the joyful news of its increase.” *Iside et Osiride*, in *Morals*, IV. p. 71.

†† “On the ninth day, when every other *Egyptian* eats a fried fish, before the outer door of his house, the priests do not eat any fish, but only burn them before their doors.” *Ibid*.

‡‡ *Morals*, I. Pt. ii. p. 17.

matter in general, they had a stronger against *excrementitious matter*, and every thing that promoted it. Hair and wool they considered in the light of excrements; and the eating of onions and beans, besides being too nutritious, and thereby promoting a great increase of matter in the body, and especially of *fat*, which they regarded as excrementitious, was the occasion, they thought, of offensive excrements. For this reason they would not allow their sacred bull to be too fat, and to prevent this, they never gave him to drink of the water of the Nile, which was supposed to have that tendency.* This also was the reason why the Egyptian priests cut off their hair, and also why they were circumcised, the fore skin being deemed both superfluous and the cause of uncleanness. According to *Hesiod*, as quoted by *Plutarch*, men's nails were cut at the festivals of the gods.†

Let this account of prohibited meats be compared with that of Moses, and it will appear, whatever M. *Langles* may say to the contrary, that the one was not copied from the other. They are formed on quite different principles. By *Moses* nothing probably was forbidden to be eaten that is really proper for the food of man in the climate of *Palestine*. In his rules we see nothing fanciful or arbitrary; whereas, nothing can be more evidently so than several of the *Hindoo* restrictions, and we are puzzled in our conjectures concerning the reasons of them. Some say their abstinence from flesh meat was enjoined on account of the supposed transmigration of human souls into the bodies of the animals: others say it was because their gods were formerly concealed in their forms; but this will hardly account for their objection to eating beans, onions, and other wholesome vegetables.

SECTION XV.

Of the Austerities of the Hindoos, and other Heathen Nations.

I now proceed to give an account of more serious austerities. It being supposed that the element of *water*, as well as that of *fire*, has the power of purifying the soul, and that the water of some rivers has more efficacy in this respect than others, *pilgrimages* for the purpose of bathing in distant

* *Morals*, IV. pp. 68—73.

† *Ibid.* p. 69.

rivers is very common with the *Hindoos*. The river that is generally preferred is the *Ganges*; in this, says Mr. Lord, they “wash their bodies, and pay their offerings; the concourse of people repairing thither is great, and the golden offerings of treasure and jewels thrown into his silver waves invaluable; he is likewise esteemed blessed and purified from sin, who can die with a palate moistened with that water.”*

Many persons add particular austerities to their journeys. “They go,” says *Bernier*, “long pilgrimages, not only stark naked, but loaded with iron chains, like those that are about the necks of elephants.”† “Not long ago one of them finished measuring the distance between *Benares* and *Jagernaut* with his body, by alternately stretching himself upon the ground, and rising; which, if he performed it as faithfully as he pretended, must have taken years to accomplish.”‡

But the great business of the expiation of crimes, and the advancement of the purification of the soul, has led those people to much greater austerities than these. Thinking they could not mortify the body too much, they have inflicted upon themselves the most dreadful torments that it is in the power of nature to support, and even beyond this; for many of them have knowingly, and in various ways, some of them the most shocking to think of, put an end to their own lives. The following are the directions solemnly prescribed in the *Institutes of Menu*, for those *Bramins* who aim at perfection:

“Having remained in the order of a housekeeper, let the twice-born man—dwell in a forest, his faith being firm, and his organs wholly subdued. When the father of a family perceives his muscles become flaccid, and his hair grey, and sees the child of his child, let him then seek refuge in a forest.—Let him eat green herbs, roots, and fruit.—Let him wear a black antelope’s hide, or a vesture of bark; let him bathe evening and morning; let him suffer the hairs of his head, his beard, and his nails, to grow continually.—Honey and flesh meat he must avoid, and all sorts of mushrooms.—Let him not eat the produce of ploughed land,—nor fruit and roots produced in a town, though hunger oppress him.—Let him slide backwards and forwards on the ground; or let him stand a whole day on tiptoe: or let him continue in

* *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, p. 60.

† “J’ai vu plusieurs qui par dévotion faisoient de longs pèlerinages non seulement tout nus, mais chargés de grosses chaînes de fer, comme celles qu’on met aux pieds des éléphants.” *Voyages*, II. p. 124.

‡ *Sketches*, I. p. 241. (P.)

motion, rising and sitting alternately ; but at sun-rise, at noon, and at sun-set, let him go to the water and bathe. In the hot season, let him sit exposed to five fires, *four blazing around him, with the sun above* ; in the rains, let him stand uncovered, *without even a mantle*, where the clouds pour *the heaviest* showers ; in the cold season, let him wear humid vesture ; and let him increase, by degrees, the austerity of his devotion ; and, enduring harsher and harsher mortifications, let him dry up his bodily frame. Then, having reposed his holy fires as the law directs, in his mind,—let him live without external fire, without a mansion, wholly silent, feeding on roots and fruit.—Or, *if he has any incurable disease*, let him advance in a straight path, towards the invincible *North-Eastern* point, feeding on water and air, till his mortal frame totally decay, and his soul become united with the Supreme. A *Brâhmen*, having shuffled off his body by any of those modes which great sages practised, and becoming void of sorrow and fear, rises to exaltation in the Divine essence.—After he has read the *Védas* in the form prescribed by law, has legally begotten a son, and has performed sacrifices to the best of his power, he *has paid his three debts*, and may then apply his heart to eternal bliss. But if a *Brâhmen* have not read the *Védas*, if he have not begotten a son, and if he have not performed sacrifices, yet shall aim at final beatitude, he shall sink to a place of degradation.”*

Compared with this, the whippings and other austerities of P. *Damiani*,† and other Catholic devotees, was indulgence. In *L' Ezour-Védam* four states of Bramins are described, according to their degrees of perfection. “The lowest of them is that in which they marry and live in the world. The next is that in which they marry, but cease to come near their wives, or take any care of their children. The third is that in which they go into the woods, to live far from the world and its snares. He who has the courage to embrace it, must for ever abandon father, mother, wife, and children. He will thus renounce all the good things of this world, and cut up by the roots anger and covetousness. He must live on alms, but without begging.” The last and most perfect consists of “those whose only occupation is the knowledge of God and of truth. They have no passions,

* *Instit.* pp. 145—150. (P.) Ch. vi. 1, 2, 5, 6, 14, 16, 22—25, 31, 32, 36, 37 ; *Jones*, VII. pp. 274—280.

† See Vol. IX. p. 233, *Note*. His *French* biographer does not describe his *austerities*, but finds in his works “trop d'allégories, de visions, de faux miracles.” *New Dict. Hist.* IV. p. 1051.

and an absolute command over their senses.”* According to the *Bagavadam*, the most perfect of these become dumb, silly, or mad.

Among the different *fasts* in honour of different deities, there is one that is thought to have singular efficacy to efface all sins. In *L' Ezour-Védam* it is called *Sondrajonon*, and “consists in an abstinence of twelve days together, in honour of the moon.” Then follows an account of the practices of each of those days. “On the eleventh, they eat nothing, but drink the urine of a cow.”† In the same work we are told, that the last state of contemplation, called *Achattangayogam*, terminates in “living on nothing but air,”‡ and this could not last long.

It were endless to recite all the particulars of the strange austerities to which those who are called *Fâquirs* subject themselves. Accounts of them may be seen in all the books of travels into *Hindostan*.§ Some of them always sit cross-legged, or hold up their arms over their heads. Some twist their arms one within the other. Some let their nails grow to a great length, and keeping their hands shut, let them

* *L' Ezour-Védam*, I. pp. 289, 292, 295. (P.) “Le premier et le plus bas de tous est de ceux qui sont engagés dans le mariage, et qui vivent dans le monde.—Malheur au pays,” justly exclaims the editor, “où un fanatisme destructeur, ose faire qualifier ainsi le plus noble, et le plus respectable de tous les états. Non seulement le célibat est chez les *Siamois* un état de perfection; mais (La *Louberc*, I. 489) le mariage y est un état de piété.

“Le second, est de ceux qu'on appelle *Brammassuris*, et qui sont encore dans le monde, mais comme des étrangers, et vivent au milieu de leur famille, comme si elle ne leur appartenoit plus, sans toucher à leurs femmes, et sans prendre aucuns soins de leurs enfans.

“Le troisième, état plus relevé que ces deux, est de ceux qui se retirent dans les bois, pour y vivre loin du monde et de ses dangers. Celui qui a le courage de l'embrasser, doit abandonner pour toujours père, mère, femme et enfans; il renoncera tout-à-fait à tous les biens du monde, et détruira, jusqu'à la racine, de la colère et de la cupidité. Il ne doit garder pour toutes richesses qu'un bâton, un vase pour mettre de l'eau, et un morceau de toile pour se couvrir;—il vivra d'aumône, mais il ne la demandera pas.

“Au-dessus de tous les évènements, rien n'est capable de leur inspirer de la crainte; leur unique occupation est de s'appliquer à la connoissance de Dieu, et de la vérité, et c'est-là ce qui en fait l'état le plus parfait. Ils ne doivent plus être susceptibles, ni d'avarice, ni de concupiscence, ni de crainte, ni d'aucune autre passion, et doivent avoir un empire absolu sur leurs sens.” *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. pp. 32—34. (P.) “On a donné à ce jeûne le nom de *Sondrajonon*, et il consiste en une abstinence de douze jours de suite à l'honneur de la lune—le onzième jour, on ne mangera rien, mais on boira de l'urine de vache.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. p. 329. (P.) “Les *Joghis* ou *Brames* contemplatifs admettent encore une autre espèce de contemplation. Elle s'appelle *Achattangayogam*. Pour y parvenir on s'élève par huit degrés différens de perfection extatique, et l'on finit par ne se nourrir plus que de l'air. (*Bagavad*. L. iv.)” *Ibid*.

§ See Vol. XVI. pp. 45, 46, 342, Note †; Lieut. Moor in *New Ann. Reg.* (1794), XV. pp. [79]—[75].

pierce through the back of them.* “Others stand on their heads, or on one leg, as others on the tops of trees, or under certain trees, or in the temples. He that continues such exercises longest, is the devoutest.”† *Bernier*, after giving a particular account of some of their strange and painful postures, says, that “many of them are so difficult, that we have no posture-masters able to imitate them.”‡

At the festival called *Mariatale*, some persons, though of the lowest classes, make a vow to be whirled in the air, in a machine constructed for the purpose, in which they are suspended on iron hooks, thrust through the skin of their backs. Being then elevated considerably above the ground, they generally brandish a sword and buckler, and behave as if they felt no pain, having commonly drank some intoxicating liquor beforehand.§ *Mr. Dow* says, that “this ridiculous custom is kept up to commemorate the sufferings of a martyr, who was in that manner tortured for his faith.”||

It was the custom of some of the ancient idolaters to make indelible marks on their hands, or other parts of their bodies, as some symbol of the deity to whose worship they particularly devoted themselves. The same is done in some parts of the *East*, though not that I have found in *Hindostan*. According to the *Universal Historians*, the people of *Arrakan* “wear the mark of their household god branded on their arms, sides, or shoulders.”¶

The idea of *fire* being one of the great purifiers of the soul, probably contributed to recommend the following instance of voluntary pain, described by *M. Sonnerat* :

“The only public festival in honour of *Darma-Raja* and *Drobédé* is that of *Nerpou-Tirounal*, or the feast of fire, because they walk on that element. It continues eighteen days, during which they who make a vow to observe it must

* See *Sketches*, I. p. 241. (P.)

† Phillips's *Malabar*, p. 22. (P.)

‡ *Voyages*, II. p. 124. (P.) “—tellement contraintes et tellement difficiles, que nous n'avons point de bateleurs qui les pussent imiter.” This intelligent observer of these scenes adds, “Tout cela, ce semble, par dévotion, et par motif de religion, où on n'en sauroit seulement découvrir l'ombre.” *Ibid*.

§ *Sonnerat*, I. p. 244. (P.) “Ceux qui pensent avoir obtenu de grands bienfaits de *Mariatale*, ou qui veulent en obtenir, font vœu de se faire suspendre en l'air. Cette cérémonie consiste à faire passer deux crochets de fer attachés au bout d'un très-long levier sous la peau du dos de celui qui a fait le vœu; ce levier est suspendu au haut d'un mât élevé d'une vingtaine de pieds.—Dans cet état—il tient dans ses mains un sabre et un bouclier et fait les gestes d'un homme qui se bat.—Celui qui doit se faire accrocher boit une certaine quantité de liqueur enivrante qui le rend presque insensible.” *Ibid*.

|| *Hindostan*, (*Dissert.*) I. p. xxxvii. (P.)

¶ *Mod. Univ. Hist.* VII. p. 23. (P.)

fast, abstain from women, lie on the ground without any mat, and walk over burning coals. On the eighteenth day they repair to the place, to the sound of musical instruments, their heads crowned with flowers, their bodies daubed over with saffron, and follow in cadence the images of Dharma-Raja and Drobédé his wife, which are carried in procession. When they approach the hot coals, they stir them, to make them burn more fiercely. They then rub their foreheads with some of the cinders; and when the deities have made the circuit of the fire three times, they walk faster or slower, according to the ardour of their devotion, on the burning coals, which cover a space of about forty feet in length. Some carry their children in their arms, and others lances, sabres, and standards. The most devout walk over the fire several times.”*

According to *Strabo* and *Pliny*, the priests of *Favonia*, even in the time of *Augustus*, used to walk barefoot on burning coals; and *Virgil* mentions this custom, in the address of *Aruns* to *Apollo*,

———medium freti pietate per ignem
Cultores multâ premimus vestigia prunâ.†

But *Strabo* says this was done in the rites of the goddess *Feronia*. He says that persons every year walked with their feet naked, and without receiving any hurt, where great crowds were assembled to see them.‡

In all countries, and in all ages, many of the rites of the Heathen religions have been of a painful nature. Several of the sacred rites of the *Egyptians* consisted of mourning. While the sacrifice on the festival of *Isis* was burning, the people kept beating themselves.§ No person could be initiated into the sacred rites of *Mithra*, among the *Persians*, till he had gone through eighty degrees of torture, of

* *Voyages*, I. pp. 247, 248. (P.) See the original, Vol. XVI. p. 199, *Note*.

† *Æn.* XI. 787, 788. See also *Silius Italicus*, L. v. (P.)

“Through that fire,
Safe in our piety, and fearless, walk
Thy worshippers, and tread on burning coals.” *Trapp*.

“*Pliny* (B. vii.) tells us, ‘Haud procul urbe Roma familiæ sunt paucæ, quæ vocantur Hyrpiæ, quæ sacrificio annuo, quod sit ad montem Soractem Apollinis, super combustam ligni struem ambulantes, non comburuntur.’ *Varro*, who is ever inveighing against religious rites, (says *Servius*,) mentions a kind of medicinal preparation, which these people made use of, in passing through the fire. ‘Eo, uti solent Hirpini ambulaturi per ignem, medicamento plantas unguunt.’ *Aruns* belonged to this people or sect.” *Jos. Warton’s Note* in *Pitt and Warton’s Virgil*, 1763, IV. p. 182.

‡ *Geographia*, L. v. (P.)

§ *Herodotus* (L. ii.), xl. (P.)

different kinds. He was first made to swim, for many days, over a great space of water, and then to throw himself into the fire. He then passed a long time in solitude, abstained from food, &c. &c. &c. If he survived these, he was initiated into the mysteries.*

We are most of all shocked at persons devoting themselves to certain and even very painful deaths, from this miserable superstition, and this is far from being uncommon with the Hindoos. "There are frequent instances of devotees and penitents," as they are called, "throwing themselves under the wheels of the chariot of Shivah, or Vishnou, when the idol is drawn out to celebrate the feast of a temple, and being thereby crushed to death."† The *Universal Historians* give the same account. "To the wheels of the waggons," they say, "on which their images are carried in procession on festival days, great iron hooks are fastened; and on these, some of the superstitious zealots are accustomed to throw themselves, so that being turned round with the wheels, they are cut to pieces. Others lie sprawling on the ground, for the wheels to pass over, and crush them to death."‡ The same is done in *Arrakan*.§ M. *Sonnerat* says that some fathers and mothers throw their children under the wheels of the chariot, "thinking that the deity will raise them to eternal happiness in another world."|| At the festival of *Tirounal*, he says, "six or seven thousand persons join to draw this chariot."¶

But the most affecting instances of voluntary death, if they can be said to be always voluntary, are those of the *Hindoo* women burning themselves alive with the bodies of their deceased husbands, which, though not absolutely required, is strongly recommended in the Hindoo institutions. We have seen the degraded state of women in this country, how much it is below that of men. In this way,

* *Jablonski (Proleg.)*, Pt. iii. pp. cxlii. cxliii. *Note.* (P.)

† *Sketches*, I. p. 242; *Bernier*, II. p. 104. (P.)

‡ Lorsque ce Chariot de Triomphe infernal marche (ce n'est point contes ni fables) il se trouve des personnes si folles et si éperduës de fausses croyances et superstitions, qu'ils se jettent, le ventre à terre, sous ces larges et pesantes roues qui les écrasent, s'étant laissé persuader qu'il n'y a action si héroïque ni si méritoire que celle-là, et que *Jagamat*, en même temps, les recevra comme ses enfans, et les fera renaître dans un état de bonheur et de grandeur." *Ibid.*

§ *Mod. Univ. Hist.* VI. p. 539. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* VII. p. 24. (P.)

|| *Voyages*, I. p. 227. (P.) "On a vu des pères et des mères de famille, tenant leurs enfans dans leurs bras, se jeter au travers pour se faire écraser et mourir, dans l'espoir que la Divinité les feroit jouir d'un bonheur éternel dans l'autre vie." *Ibid.*

¶ *Ibid.* p. 226. (P.) "Six à sept mille personnes traînent le Dieu sur un grand chariot." *Ibid.*

however, and it seems to be the only one, they have an opportunity of attaining the same state of happiness with them after death. And this action is esteemed so honourable for the family in which it takes place, and to the religion itself, that nothing is omitted, especially on the part of the Bramins, to encourage, and almost compel widows to do it; and if they once give their consent, it is hardly in their power to recede. And according to the testimony of travellers, many of these widows go to the fire as much against their wills as if it was a real human sacrifice.*

Mr. Holwell says, that the woman “*is not permitted to declare her resolution*” to burn before twenty-four hours after the death of her husband,” and that this custom was introduced by the authors of “the *Chatah* and *Aughtorrah Bhades*,” who “strained some obscure passages in *Brahmah’s Chastah Bhade*,” for the purpose. Mr. Dow says, that this practice was never “reckoned a religious duty, as has been very erroneously supposed in the *West*.”† But by this he can only mean that it is not of universal obligation.

The strict Hindoos certainly consider this action as one of the most important in all their religion, the cause of which, it is said, it would be hardly right to investigate. “It is proper,” say the *Gentoo Laws*, “for a woman to burn with her husband’s corpse.”‡ “Every woman who thus burns herself, shall remain in paradise with her husband three *crore*, and fifty *lacks* of years, by destiny. If she cannot

* *Bernier*, who witnessed many of these horrid scenes, thus relates the force put by the *Bramins* on a widow, only twelve years of age:

“Il me souvient, entr’autres que je vis brûler à *Lahor* une femme, qui étoit très-belle, et qui étoit encore toute jeune, je ne crois pas qu’elle eût plus de douze ans; cette pauvre petite malheureuse paroissoit plus morte que vive à l’approche du bucher; elle trembloit et pleuroit à grosses larmes, et cependant trois ou quatre de ces bourreaux, avec une vieille qui la tenoit par dessous l’aisselle, la poussèrent et la firent asseoir sur le bucher; et de la crainte qu’ils avoient qu’elle ne s’enfuît, ou qu’elle ne se tourmentât, ils lui lièrent les pieds et les mains, mirent le feu de tous côtés, et la brûlèrent toute vive.” *Bernier* adds, “J’eus bien de la peine à retenir ma colère, mais il se fallut contenter de détester cette horrible religion.” *Voyages*, II. pp. 118, 119. See the accounts of two willing victims in Mr. Holwell’s *Narrative*, Vol. XV. pp. 44, 45; and Mr. Hodges’s description of a scene which he witnessed on the banks of the *Ganges*, near *Benares*, “*Travels in India*,” 1780—1783, in *New Ann. Reg.* (1793) XIV. pp. 84—86.

“Two English officers, who were in the service of the *Nabob of Arcot*, being present at one of these ceremonies, in the province of *Tanjour*, were so affected by it, that they drew their swords and rescued the woman.—The *Brahmans* positively rejected her solicitations for permission to burn herself afterwards; saying she was polluted, and had lost the virtues of her caste.” *Sketches*, II. p. 29.

† *Hindustan*, (*Dissert.*) I. pp. xxxiii. xxxiv. (P.)

‡ *Halthed’s Pref.* p. lxvii. (P.)

burn, she must, in that case, preserve an inviolable chastity." She "then goes to paradise;" otherwise "to hell."* Another powerful inducement to this practice is, "that the children of the wife who burns, become thereby illustrious, and are sought after in marriage by the most opulent and honourable of their *caste*, and sometimes received into a *caste* superior to their own."†

Some of the cases of this kind, mentioned by travellers, are very affecting. The heroism and tranquillity with which some women do this, holding their husbands' heads in their laps, and lighting the fire themselves, is astonishing; while others are tied fast, or pushed into the fire, their shrieks being drowned by the Bramins. *Bernier* saw a woman burning with her husband without discovering any symptom of terror, while five of her maids, after dancing round the fire, threw themselves into it, one after another, with the greatest seeming indifference.‡ He says, that when they discover any reluctance, the Bramins sometimes force them into the fire.§ In some cases, he says, that, instead of burning them, they bury them up to the neck, and then strangle them, by turning their heads round.||

On the deaths of great persons, those victims of superstition, voluntary or involuntary, are sometimes very numerous. At the death of a king of *Tanjore*, no less than

* *Gentoo Laws*, p. 253. (P.)

† *Holwell's Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 89. (P.)

‡ *Voyages*, II. pp. 112, 113. (P.) "Le bucher fut incontinent tout en feu, parce qu'on avoit jeté dessus quantité d'huile et de beurre, et je vis, dans ce même temps, au travers des flammes, que le feu se prenoit aux habits de la femme, qui étoient frottés d'huiles de senteur mêlées avec de la poudre de santal et du safran; je vis tout cela, et ne remarquai point que la femme s'inquiétât et se tourmentât en aucune façon.

"Ce ne fut pas là la fin de cette infernale tragédie; je croyois que ce n'étoit que par cérémonie que ces cinq femmes chantoient et dansoient à l'entour de la fosse: mais je fus bien étonné, lorsque la flamme s'étant prise aux habits d'une d'entr'elles, elle se laissa aller la tête la première dans la fosse, et qu'ensuite une autre accablée de la flamme et de la fumée en fit autant que la première; mon étonnement redoubla un peu après quand je vis que les trois qui restoient se reprirent par la main, continuèrent le branle sans s'effrayer, et qu'enfin les unes après les autres elles se précipitèrent dans le feu comme avoient fait leurs compagnes." *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.* p. 117. (P.) "Les démons de Brahmins, qui sont là avec leurs grands bâtons, les étonnent, les animent, ou les poussent même dedans, comme je l'ai vu à une jeune qui avoit reculé cinq ou six pas du bucher, et à une autre qui se tourmentoît quand elle vit prendre le feu autour d'elle et à ses habits, ces bourreaux la repoussant deux ou trois fois avec leurs fregons." *Ibid.* See *supra*, p. 251, Note *.

|| *Ibid.* p. 120. (P.) "Dans quelques endroits des Indes, au lieu de brûler ces femmes qui veulent mourir après la mort de leurs maris, ils les enterrent peu à peu toutes vives jusqu'à la gorge, et puis tout d'un coup se jettent deux ou trois dessus, leur tordent le col, et les achèvent d'étouffer, les couvrant vite de paniers de terre et leur marchant sur la tête." *Ibid.*

three hundred of his concubines leaped into the flames, and four hundred burned themselves at the funeral of a Naique of *Madura*.*

Dying by fire is deemed very meritorious in men, but is seldom practised. There is, however, one celebrated instance of this on record, viz. that of *Calanus*, an Indian philosopher, as he is called, who burned himself in the presence of *Alexander* the Great and his officers.† Sometimes the *Hindoos* burn persons when they think them to be past recovery. An "English surgeon" once met a number of persons carrying a man, whom they thought to be dying, to a pile; when he "felt his pulse, and gave some hopes of recovery; some kinder friend, among the rest, dissuaded the company from proceeding; and in a little time he was restored to health."‡

The idea of purifying the departing soul by means of *water*, is the reason that great numbers of *Hindoos* choose, or are made to die in rivers. Very often, says *Bernier*, the *Bramins* "plunge the sick into the river, when they are just about to expire, that the soul, in the act of departing, may be washed from all the impurities contracted in the body." "This," he said, "he heard not only from the vulgar, but from the most learned of their *Bramins*."§ And "when once a man has desired to be conducted" to the river, "he cannot retract his word, and therefore he is carried to it; where first they put his feet in, and then make him drink a great deal of water, exhorting him to drink it with devotion and confidence, and to look upon it as a certain

* *Maurice's Indian Antiquities*. (P.)

† *Plutarch* thus describes the event which occurred soon after *Alexander* entered Persia:

"It was here that *Calanus*, after having been disordered a little while with the cholic, desired to have his funeral pile erected. He approached it on horseback, offered up his prayers to heaven, poured the libations upon himself, cut off part of his hair, and threw it in the fire; and before he ascended the pile, took leave of the Macedonians, desiring them to spend the day in jollity and drinking with the king; 'for I shall see him,' said he, 'in a little time at Babylon.' So saying, he stretched himself upon the pile, and covered himself up. Nor did he move at the approach of the flames, but remained in the same posture till he had finished his sacrifice according to the custom of the sages of his country. Many years after, another Indian did the same before Augustus Cæsar, at Athens, whose tomb is shewn to this day, and called the Indian's tomb." *Langhorn*, Ed. 3, 1778, IV. pp. 315, 316.

‡ *Mod. Univ. Hist.* VI. p. 280. (P.)

§ *Voyages*, II. p. 121. (P.) "Lorsqu' ils jugent qu'il s'en va expirer, ils l'enfoncent tout d'un coup dedans, et le laissent là après avoir bien criailé et battu des mains: c'est, disent-ils, afin que l'ame en sortant soit lavée de toutes les impuretés qu'elle auroit pu contracter dans le corps; et ce n'est point seulement une raison du bas peuple; j'ai vu des plus doctes d'entr'eux qui la rapportoient sérieusement." *Ibid.*

means of washing his soul, and blotting out all his sins; and at last they push him into it, over head and ears, even though he should desire to return home. For many are thrown in after this manner, whom an indiscreet devotion, or some discontent in their family, had brought thither, who were not sick enough to think of dying so soon, and repented very much of the fault they had committed; but it was too late.”*

This mildest of all religions, (for such is the character that is generally given to it,) a religion which will not hurt a fly,† was in its origin as cruel and sanguinary as any other. Like all other ancient systems of Heathenism, it enjoined human sacrifices, though in process of time they were laid aside, as they were in a great measure by the *Egyptians*, the *Greeks*, and the *Romans*. The *Vedas* enjoined human sacrifices.‡ The *Institutes of Menu* say that the sacrifice of a man was required in former ages, but not then.§ They say also that the obligation to expiation, extending to death, is abrogated.|| Sir William Jones says, that the ancient solemn sacrifices of the Hindoos were “of a man, a bull, and a horse.”¶

In a collection of voyages by *Delaporte*, which, though no authorities are quoted in it, is supposed to be compiled from such as may be depended upon, the traveller says, “In *Malabar* a person told us that one of his ancestors had been sacrificed to their idols. It was the ancient custom of the country to condemn certain persons to sacrifice themselves, which they did by giving themselves twelve wounds with

* “Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews,” pp. 52, 53. (P.)

† At *Cambaye*, *P. Della Valle* saw “a famous hospital of birds of all sorts, which for being sick, lame, deprived of their mates, or otherwise needing food and cure, are kept and tended there with diligence; as also the men who take care of them are maintained by the public alms.” When they are “recovered, and in good plight, if they be wild, they are let go at liberty; if domestic, they are given to some pious person who keeps them in his house. The most curious thing,” he says, “I saw in this place, were certain little mice, who, being found orphans, without sire or dam to tend them, were put into this hospital; and a venerable old man with a white beard, keeping them in a box amongst cotton, very diligently tended them, with his spectacles on his nose, giving them milk to eat with a bird’s feather, because they were so little that as yet they could eat nothing else; and, as he told us, he intended, when they were grown up, to let them go free whither they pleased.—The next morning, going about the city, we saw another hospital of goats, kids, sheep and weathers, either sick or lame.—We saw another hospital of cows and calves, some whereof had broken legs, others more infirm, very old or lean, and therefore were kept here to be cured.” *Travels*, pp. 35, 36. (P.)

‡ *Sketches*, l. p. 225. (P.)

§ *Instit.* p. 364. (P.) *Jones*, VIII. p. 154.

|| *Instit.* p. 365. (P.) *Jones*, VIII. p. 155.

¶ *Dissert. on Asia*, l. p. 51. (P.) “Obsolete, and now illegal.” *Ibid.*

so many different knives. The last stab was to the heart, after which he was burned by his family.”*

“Various animals,” among which were *men*, as well as bulls, “were anciently sacrificed by the Chinese.”† Indeed, this horrid custom seems to have been universally practised by all ancient nations, except that of the *Hebrews* only; so that Mr. Holwell’s denial of it with respect to the *Hindoos*,‡ besides being contradicted by positive authorities, is of no weight at all.

The temples of *Ilythia* or *Lucina*, in *Egypt*, were stained with human blood. There they burned men alive. Three were sacrificed in this cruel manner every day, and, therefore, when *Amosis* forbade those sacrifices, he directed three images of wax to be burned in their stead. The authors of these horrid rites, *Jablonski* supposes to have been the shepherds who invaded, and for some time kept possession of *Egypt*.§

Plutarch says, that “*Amestris*, the wife of *Xerxes*, buried twelve men alive, as a sacrifice to *Pluto* to prolong her own life;”|| and *Photius* says, that the Persians offered men, women, and children to *Mithra*. *Celsus*, as quoted by *Origen*, says that they offered seven embryos to this deity, on account of the seven planets. “The Romans,” *Plutarch* says, “buried two men and two women alive in the beast-market; two of them were Greeks, and two Gauls,” and yet censured “the barbarians, called *Bletonienses*,” for sacrificing “a man to the gods.”¶

If the *Bramins* in the *East* bore, as has been supposed, any relation to the *Druids* in the *West*, this horrid rite must have prevailed in *Hindustan* as it did among the *Gauls* and *Britons*, whose religion was so abhorrent to humanity on this account, that the *Romans* forbade the exercise of it.

The religious customs of the *Northern* nations of *Europe* were, in several respects, similar to those of the *East*; and with them human sacrifices were universal, and continued a long time. It was a maxim with the *Gauls*, that where the life of a man was concerned, the gods would not be appeased but with the lives of men; and, therefore, when they were seized with a dangerous illness, or in any great danger, they sacrificed men for victims, or made vows that they would sacrifice them. In *Britain*, prisoners of war,

* *Delaporte*, III. p. 444. (P.)

† *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 229. (P.)

‡ See *supra*, p. 242, Note.

§ *Pantheon*, Pt. ii. pp. 69, 75. (P.)

|| *Of Superstition*, in *Morals*, I. Pt. ii. p. 20.

¶ *Roman Questions*. (P.) *Morals*, II. Pt. v. p. 59.

robbers, and persons guilty of other heinous crimes, were either slain on altars, or burned alive in machines of wicker-work constructed in the shape of men, as sacrifices to their deities.*

In *Scandinavia* they held a festival "every ninth month, which was to last nine days, and every day they offered up nine living victims, whether men or animals. But the most solemn sacrifices were those which were offered up at Upsal, in Sweden, every ninth year. Then the king, the senate, and all the citizens of any distinction were obliged to appear in person; and "they chose among the captives, in time of war, and slaves, in time of peace, nine persons to be sacrificed." But "in great calamities," they sacrificed persons of more consequence. "The first king of *Verm-land* was burnt in honour of *Odin*, to put an end to a great dearth.—Hacon, king of Norway, offered his son in sacrifice, to obtain of *Odin* the victory over his enemy Harald. Aune, king of Sweden, devoted to *Odin* the blood of his nine sons, to prevail on that god to prolong his life. The ancient history of the North abounds in similar examples."†

In "the capital of Denmark" they offered "every nine years, in the month of January,—ninety-nine men, as many horses, dogs, and cocks.—In Iceland" there were "two temples, in which they offered up human victims, and a famous pit, or well, in which they were thrown headlong."‡ "The priests of these inhuman gods were called *DROT-ES*, a name which probably answers to the Gallic word *DRUIDS*."§

The reflections of *Plutarch* on this subject, in his tract on *Superstition*, are so much to the purpose, that I shall close this Section with them: "Men," he says, "were not at first made Atheists by any fault they found in the heavens or stars, or seasons of the year, or in those revolutions or motions of the sun about the earth that make the day and night, nor yet by observing any mistake or disorder, either in the breeding of animals, or the production of fruits. No, it was the uncouth actions and senseless passions of superstition, her canting words, her foolish gestures, her charms,

* *Cæsar's Com.* L. vi. S. xv. (P.) "Pro vitâ hominis nisi vitâ hominis red-datur, non posse aliter deorum immortalium numen placari arbitrantur: publicæque ejusdem generis habent instituta sacrificia. Alii inmani magnitudine simulacra habent: quorum contexta viminibus membra, vivis hominibus complent; quibus succensus, circumventi flammâ exanimantur homines." *Ibid.* See Vol. II. p. 84.

† Mallet's *North. Antiq.* I. pp. 133, 134. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 138. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 140. (P.)

her magic, her freakish processions, her tabourings, her foul expiations, her vile methods of purgation, and her barbarous and inhuman penances and bemirings at the temples. It was these, I say, that gave occasion to many to affirm it would be far happier if there were no gods at all, than such as are pleased and delighted with such fantastical toys, and who thus abuse their votaries, and are incensed and pacified with trifles."

"Had it not been much better for the so-much-famed *Gauls* and *Scythians*, that they had neither thought, nor imagined, nor heard any thing of their gods, than to have believed them such as would be pleased with the blood of human sacrifices; and that accounted such for the most complete and meritorious of expiations? How much better had it been for the *Carthaginians*, if they had had either a *Critias* or a *Diagoras* for their first law-maker, so that they might have believed neither god nor spirits, than to make such offerings to Saturn as they made! But they knowingly and willingly themselves devoted their own children; and they who had none of their own, bought some of poor people, and then sacrificed them like lambs or pigeons; the poor mother standing by the while, without either a sigh or a tear; or if by chance she fetched a sigh, or let fall a tear, she lost the price of her child, and it was nevertheless sacrificed. All the places round the image were, in the mean time, filled with the noise of hautboys and tabors, to drown the poor infants' crying."*

So far was this most horrid rite of human sacrifice from finding a place among the institutions of *Moses*, that in his writings, and in all the books of the *Old Testament*, it is spoken of with the greatest abhorrence and detestation; and the practice is particularly mentioned as the greatest of those abominations for which the ancient inhabitants of *Canaan* were expelled, to make way for the Israelites. *Deut.* xii. 29—31: "When the Lord thy God shall cut off the nations from before thee, whither thou goest to possess them, and thou succeedest them, and dwellest in their land, take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee, and that thou inquire not after their gods; saying, How did these nations serve their gods? Even so will I do likewise. Thou

* *Morals*, Pt. ii. I. pp. 19, 20. Mr. Baxter, the translator of this piece, adds, "Here is both the exactest and most authentic description of the scripture-custom of offering children to *Moloch*, of any that I remember to have met with." *Ibid.* p. 25.

shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God. For every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods. For even their sons and their daughters they have burned in the fire to their gods." The shedding of *innocent blood*, with which the *Israelites* are so often charged, and which is mentioned by the prophets as one of the causes of their expulsion from their country, was, I doubt not, the blood of innocent children sacrificed in this manner. Notwithstanding this, the *Israelites* are, by modern *unbelievers*, treated as *barbarians*, and said to have borrowed their institutions from those of their more civilized neighbours ; and it is affirmed that the five books of *Moses* are only copies of those of the *Hindoos*. What must be the force of prejudice in men who can entertain and propagate this opinion !

SECTION XVI.

Of the Hindoo Penances.

THE rules concerning penance, or atonement for specific offences, makes one of the most serious articles in the system of the Hindoo religion ; and so numerous and intricate are they, that it must have been very difficult to understand, and still more to remember them.

In the *Institutes of Menu* there is the following enumeration of the principal agents in the great business of the purification of the soul, when it has contracted any pollution : " Sacred learning, austere devotion, fire, holy aliment, earth, the wind, water, smearing with cow-dung, are prescribed acts of religion ; the sun and time are purifiers of embodied spirits."* It is not easy, however, to conceive how things so very different in their natures as these are, should produce the same effect.

The same rites of purification were also had recourse to, by way of prevention, as well as for the cure of moral evil ; and even the inferior deities were thought to have practised some of them, as we learn from the following passage in the same work : " He who, for a whole month, eats no more than thrice eighty mouthfuls of wild grains, *as he happens* by any means *to meet with them*, keeping his organs in subjection, shall attain the same abode with the regent of the moon. The eleven *Rudras*, the twelve *A'dityas*, the eight

* *Instit.* p. 136. (P.) Ch. v. 105 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 262.

Vasus, the *Maruts*, or genii of the winds, and the seven great *Rishis*, have performed this lunar penance, as a security from all evil.”*

According to the laws of *Moses*, a person who had touched a dead body was deemed unclean. But the idea of this kind of impurity is carried much farther by the *Hindoos*. With them, “the man who hears that a kinsman is dead, in a distant country, becomes unclean; if ten days after the death have not passed, he is unclean for the remainder of those days only. But if the ten days have elapsed, he is impure for three nights, and if a year have expired, he is purified merely by touching water.”†

Women are subject to various impurities. With respect to some of them we read that, “by oblations to fire during the mother’s pregnancy, by holy rites on the birth of the child, by the tonsure of his head, with a lock of hair left on it, by the ligation of the sacrificial cord, are the seminal and uterine taints of the three classes wholly removed.”‡

Not only is the drinking of wine and spirituous liquors a great sin, but even for drinking water in a vessel in which there has been any liquor of that kind, the following purification is deemed necessary: “For drinking water which has stood in a vessel, where spirit of rice, or any spirituous liquor had been kept, he must swallow nothing for five *days and nights* but the plant *sanc’hapushpi*, boiled in milk.”§

But the drinking of the spirit itself is an offence not so easily expiated. “Any twice-born man who has *intentionally* drunk of spirit of rice, through perverse delusion of mind, may drink more spirit in flame, and atone for his offence by severely burning his body: or he may drink, boiling hot, until he die, the urine of a cow, or pure water, or milk, or clarified butter, or juice expressed from cowdung.”||

The following are different cases of penance for the offences of Bramins or priests. He who has “taught the *Véda* on a forbidden day, may atone for his offence by subsisting a whole year on barley alone.”¶ “He who, for seven successive days, omits the ceremony of begging food, and offers not wood to the sacred fire, must perform the

* *Instit.* p. 338. (P.) Ch. xi. 221, 222; *Jones*, VIII. p. 121.

† *Instit.* p. 132. (P.) Ch. v. 75, 76; *Jones*, VII. p. 257.

‡ *Instit.* p. 20. (P.) Ch. ii. 27; *Jones*, VII. p. 115.

§ *Instit.* p. 328. (P.) Ch. xi. 148; *Jones*, VIII. p. 108.

|| *Instit.* p. 320. (P.) Ch. xi. 91, 92; *Jones*, VIII. p. 97.

¶ *Instit.* p. 334. (P.) Ch. xi. 199; *Jones*, VIII. p. 117.

penance of *avarcirni*, unless he be afflicted with illness.—This duty of a mendicant is ordained by the wise for a *Bráhmén* alone.”* “The priest, who keeps a sacred hearth, but voluntarily neglects *the morning and evening oblations* to his fires, must perform—the penance *chándráyana* for one month; since that *neglect* is equally sinful with the slaughter of a son.”† “Let a *Sannyàsse*” (the highest attainment of a Bramin) “by way of expiation for *the death* of those creatures which he may have destroyed unknowingly, by day or by night, make six suppressions of his breath, having duly bathed.”‡ The reward for not violating this precept is peculiarly great. “To the *Bráhmén* by whom not even the smallest dread has been occasioned to sentient creatures, there can be no dread from any quarter whatever, when he obtains a release from his mortal body.”§

The effect of rightly pronouncing certain words, especially *óm*, the *gáyatrí*, and another which Sir William Jones supposes to signify the earth, the sky and heaven, is represented as peculiarly great in the business of expiation. The *Institutes of Menu* say concerning a student, “Let not the sun ever set or rise while he lies asleep.—If the sun should rise or set, while he sleeps through sensual indulgence, he must fast a whole day, repeating the *gáyatrí*.|| “Should a *Bráhmén*, who has once tasted the holy juice of the moonplant, even smell the breath of a man who has been drinking spirits, he must remove the taint by thrice repeating the *gáyatrí*, while he suppresses his breath in water, and by eating clarified butter *after that ceremony*.—By three thousand repetitions of the *gáyatrí*, with intense application of mind, and by subsisting on milk only, for a whole month, in the pasture of cows, a *Bráhmén*, who has received any gift from a bad man, or a bad gift from any man, may be cleared from sin.—The oblation of clarified butter to fire must be made every day by the penitent himself, accompanied with the mighty words *earth, sky, heaven*.—Sixteen suppressions of the breath, while the holiest of texts is repeated, with the three mighty words, and the trilateral syllable, continued each day for a month, absolve even the slayer of a *Bráhmén* from his hidden faults.—A priest who should retain in his memory the whole *Rigvéda*, would be

* *Instit.* p. 41. (P.) Ch. ii. 178, 190; *Jones*, VII. pp. 141, 142.

† *Instit.* p. 312. (P.) Ch. xi. 41; *Jones*, VIII. p. 88.

‡ *Instit.* p. 151. (P.) Ch. vi. 69; *Jones*, VII. pp. 285, 286.

§ *Instit.* p. 150. (P.) Ch. vi. 40; *Jones*, VII. p. 281.

|| *Instit.* p. 45. (P.) Ch. ii. 219; *Jones*, VII. p. 147.

absolved from guilt, even if he had slain the inhabitants of the three worlds, and had eaten food from the foulest hands.”*

We have here a singular conjunction of offences, as of equal degrees of guilt, when in the nature of things they are certainly very different; and from the order in which they are placed, it should seem that the eating of food from foul hands was a greater crime than murder. However, these *Institutes of Menu* say, that “some of the learned consider an expiation as confined to involuntary sin; but others, from the evidence of the *Vêda*, hold it effectual even in the case of a voluntary offence.”† But there cannot well be any doubt that the latter are in the right, if this penance, and many others which I shall copy from these *Institutes*, be agreeable to the *Vedas*.

The effect of these religious acts is not confined to the living. It extends even to the dead; for the *manes* are supposed to partake of the food that is offered to them.‡ We are even informed what will satisfy them for any specified time; and the cases are not a little curious.

“What sort of oblations given duly to the *manes*, are capable of satisfying them for a long time, or for eternity, I will now declare without omission. The ancestors of men are satisfied a whole month with *tila*, rice, barley, black lentils, or vetches, water, roots, and fruit given with prescribed ceremonies; two months, with fish; three months, with venison; four, with mutton; five with the flesh of *such* birds, *as* the twice-born may eat; six months, with the flesh of kids; seven, with that of spotted deer; eight, with that of the deer or antelope called *éna*; nine, with that of the *ruru*: ten months are they satisfied with the flesh of wild boars, or wild buffaloes; eleven, with that of rabbits, or hares, and of tortoises; a whole year, with the milk of cows, and food made of that milk; from the flesh of the long-eared white goat, their satisfaction endures twelve years. The pot-herb *cálasáca*, the fish *mahásalca* or the *diodon*, the flesh of a rhinoceros, or an iron-coloured kid, honey, and all such forest grains as are eaten by hermits, are formed for their

* *Instit.* pp. 328, 334, 338, 341, 343. (P.) Ch. xi. 150, 195, 223, 249, 262; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 108, 116, 121, 125, 128.

† *Instit.* p. 313. (P.) Ch. xi. 45; *Jones*, VIII. p. 89.

‡ According to *Homer*, the ghosts of the dead drank of blood, and then spake. The Author of the *Life of Homer* in Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica*, (p. 341,) after mentioning this, adds, “For he knew that that blood was the food of the spirit (*pneuma*), and that the spirit is either the soul itself (*psuche*), or the vehicle of the soul.” (P.)

satisfaction without end. Whatever pure food, mixed with honey, a man offers on the thirteenth day of the moon, in the season of rain, and under the lunar asterism *maghà*, has likewise a ceaseless duration. Oh! may that man, *say the manes*, be born in our line, who may give us milky food, with honey and pure butter,* both on the thirteenth of the moon, and when the shadow of an element falls to the East! Whatever a man endued with strong faith, piously offers as the law has directed, becomes a perpetual, unperishable gratification to his ancestors in the other world.”†

In these wretched superstitions we may perhaps see the reason of some of the laws of *Moses*, many of which were evidently intended to counteract the customs of the Heathens in early times. What we find in his writings concerning the *sacrifices for the dead*,‡ and phrases of a similar import, probably refer to the manes of dead ancestors, which we see to make so great a part of the religion of the *Hindoos*, and also of the *Chinese*, but which never enters into that of the *Hebrews*. Perhaps, too, the great stress we here find to be laid on the use of *honey* in these oblations was the reason why it was wholly forbidden in the *Hebrew* ritual, and *salt* only made use of.§

It is in vain, however, for the most prejudiced *unbeliever* to look for any thing parallel to this doctrine of purification and expiation in the institutions of *Moses*, or that looks as if they were borrowed, directly or indirectly, from them, as *M. Langles* asserts. All the modes of purification prescribed there, are for involuntary offences, or impurities that are not of a moral nature. With respect to real *crimes*, hear what *David* says, (*Psalms* li. 16, 17,) “Thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit. A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” Repentance and reformation is the only atonement for sin, according to the religion of the *Hebrews*, but that was effectual. Hear what the prophet *Ezekiel* says on this sub-

* A traveller who left *India* in 1702, says “I know that the *Brahmans* drink much of melted *butter*, and am also assured, that they are guilty of strange excess among themselves, and that this *liquor* gets into their heads, and makes them drunk, which appears to be very extraordinary; and I could have wished to have seen the experience of it, but these gentlemen know so well how to take their measures for doing it secretly, when they have a mind to indulge their pleasures, that 'tis impossible to surprise them at any time.” *Customs of the East Indians and Jews*, p. 105.

† *Iust. l.* p. 86. (*P.*) Ch. iii. 266—275; *Jones*, VII. pp. 197—199.

‡ See, on *Deut.* xxvi. 14, Vol. XI. pp. 291, 292.

§ See, on *Lev.* ii. 11, 13, Vol. XI. p. 195.

ject (*Ch.* xxxiii. 14, 15): "When I say unto the wicked, 'Thou shalt surely die; and he turneth from his sin, and doeth judgment and justice, *and* the wicked returneth the pledge, giveth that again which he hath taken by violence, walketh in the statutes of life, so as not to commit iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die.'"*

As to austerities of any kind, none are prescribed in the books of *Moses*. The only thing of that nature to which any countenance is given, is the vow of the *Nazarites*, which was to drink no wine, and not to cut their hair for a limited time, fixed by themselves.† The *Hebrews* had only one prescribed day of fasting in the whole year, and that not attended with any particular austerity;‡ whereas they had three annual festivals, each of some continuance,§ besides the *Sabbath*, which, though a day of rest from labour, was always considered as a festival.|| Their lands also had their rest, and were to lie uncultivated every seventh year; but they had the promise of a double harvest the year preceding, when they could not fail to observe whether the promise was fulfilled or not; so that they ran no risk from omitting to plough and sow their lands; and when their law was most strictly observed, as it was after their return from the *Babylonish* Captivity, we hear no complaint of an inconvenience resulting from it. If there was any use, as there evidently was, in reminding the *Israelites* that it was God who gave them their country, and who put them into the possession of it by his own power, and of his right to give it on what terms he thought proper, it would not be easy to fix upon any method better adapted to answer the purpose. The foundation of the rite of sacrificing, which appeared so proper as to have been adopted by all mankind, was the very same. It expressed their acknowledgment that they received all from God, by giving back to him some part of it. The spontaneous produce of the ground on the *sabbatical* year was given to the poor,¶ and what was given them, was considered as given to God.

The rite of circumcision, which was prescribed to *Abraham*, being performed on children when they were only eight days old, who could suffer nothing from apprehension beforehand, and but little pain afterwards, is a

* *Newcome*.

† See, on *Numb.* vi. 5, 5, Vol. XI. pp. 229, 230.

‡ See *Lev.* xxiii. 27—29, Vol. XI. pp. 28, 218.

§ See *Exod.* xxiii. 14—19, Vol. XI. pp. 17, 18, 28, 29.

|| See *Exod.* xxxv. 3, Vol. XI. pp. 29, 189.

¶ See, on *Exod.* xxiii. 11, Vol. XI. p. 165.

circumstance of small moment ; and if there was to be any indelible mark upon their flesh, to remind every individual of the nation of their extraction and future prospects, and thereby attach them to their laws, nothing perhaps could have been thought of so well adapted to answer the end, with so little real inconvenience. Other people voluntarily practise the same without any complaint. This was the case of the *Egyptian* priests, of the *Arabs*, and all the *Mahometans*, at a much more inconvenient time of life.

SECTION XVII.

Of the Superstition of the Hindoos and others for the Cow, and also for the Elements of Fire and Water.

OF so much importance are many things relating to the *cow*, in the *Hindoo* purifications, that I shall appropriate the greatest part of this section to the subject ; subjoining some particulars concerning two other great instruments of mental purgation, viz. *fire* and *water*.

It is not easy to give a satisfactory account of the excessive veneration the *Hindoos* have for the cow. There are many other animals, at least nearly as useful, the sheep for instance, for which the *Hindoos* profess no particular regard ; whereas on this principle it ought to have its share ; and the origin of this superstition is so remote, that we have no means of tracing it. That the *Hindoos*, and other very ancient nations equally ignorant of the constitution and laws of nature, should entertain the opinion of there being something divine in the elements of *fire* and *water*, both possessed of great powers of doing good or harm, is as easily accounted for as the worship of the sun, moon, and stars, which have much, and were supposed to have more, influence on the earth. Fire also, being used in the purification of metals, and water in that of other things, they naturally enough became emblems of *purification* in general ; and therefore, as partaking of divinity, might be imagined to have a spiritual as well as a corporeal use. But these considerations throw no light on the superstition of the *Hindoos* with respect to the cow.

Mr. Holwell says the cow is so much respected, because this is the last of the *eighty-seven* stages of purgation appointed for fallen spirits, immediately preceding their

transmigration into the body of a man.* But then the form immediately preceding that of the cow, should have some proportional share of respect shewn to it, which is by no means the case.

This respect for the cow we also find among the ancient *Egyptians*. According to *Plutarch* the cow was considered by them as the image of *Isis*.† *Apuleius*, describing the *Isiac* procession, says, the cow was the fruitful image of the goddess, the mother of all.‡ And according to *Ælian*,§ as quoted by Mr. Bryant, the object of adoration, at three cities of Egypt, was a heifer or cow.|| Also “the Syrians held a cow in great reverence.”¶

The modern *Parsis*, following, no doubt, the ancient *Persians*, never kill or eat a cow, or bull.** With them also, as with the *Hindoos*, the urine of a cow is considered as a great purifier. They wash in it, and sometimes drink it.††

The probability is, that the philosophers who framed the *Egyptian* and *Hindoo* systems imagined the cow to be a suitable emblem of the attributes of some deity, as the bull was of others. Leaving this speculation, I shall proceed to recite some of the more curious articles of those *Hindoo* penances in which the cow is concerned; and they are only a few that might be collected; and let my reader consider that if it be disgusting, as it certainly is, to read them, how much more it must be to practise them. Let him also consider whether the *Hebrews* would have been any gainers by changing their institutions for those of the *Hindoos*. If I were

* See *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. pp. 50, 73, 74. (P.)

† *De Iside et Ostride*. (P.) “*Orus* laid violent hands upon his mother (*Isis*), and plucked the royal diadem from off her head. But *Hermes* presently stepped in and clapped a cow's head upon her, instead of a helmet. They cover a gilded cow with a black linen pall, and thus expose her to public view, at the mourning of the Goddess (*Isis*) for four days together.” *Morals*, IV. pp. 87, 113. The translator says “this was the golden calf mentioned in the Scripture.” Yet see on *Exod.* xxxii. 4, Vol. XI. p. 182.

‡ “—— Hujus vestigium continuum sequebatur bos, in erectum levata statum, et bos omniparentis deæ secundum simulacrum; quod, residens humeris suis, proferbat unus è ministerio beato, gressu gestuoso.” *Metam.* Lib. xi. (P.) *Ludy. Bat.* 1786, pp. 776, 777.

§ *De Animal.* L. x. C. xxvii.

|| “Analysis of Ancient Mythology,” 1774, II. pp. 417, 418. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* p. 424. (P.)

** *Tavernier*, I. p. 493. (P.) “Il leur est étroitement défendu par leurs prêtres du bœuf ou de la vache, n'y d'en tuer.” *Ibid.*

†† *Ibid.* pp. 492, 493. (P.) “Quand il arrive qu'en se peignant la barbe ou la tête il tombe quelques cheveux sur les habits, et qu'ils y de meurent plus de six heures il faut que ces habits soient lavés d'urine de vache ou de bœuf pour les purifier.—Cette urine est leur grande purification.—Ils s'en servent aussi pour la composition d'une eau qu'ils font boire à ceux qui sont tombés en quelque péché, et qui s'en sont confessés.” *Ibid.* See *supra*, p. 259.

to enjoin the following penance, it should be on those who, like M. *Langles*, prefer the latter to the former :

“ For taking what may be eaten, or what may be sipped, a carriage, a bed or a seat, roots, flowers, or fruit an atonement may be made by swallowing the five pure things produced from a cow, *or milk, curds, butter, urine, dung.*” * “ Eating *for a whole day* the dung and urine of cows, mixed with curds, milk, clarified butter, and water boiled with *cusa*-grass, and then fasting entirely for a *day and a night*, is the penance called *Sántapana.*” † The following is a slight penance for a small and involuntary fault : “ He who has made any excretion, being greatly pressed, either without water *near him*, or in water, may be purified by touching a cow.” ‡

If a cow dies, “ by accident or violence, or through the neglect of the owner,” Mr. Holwell says, “ it is a token of God’s wrath against the wickedness of the spirit of *the proprietor*, who from thence is warned that at the dissolution of his human form he will not be deemed worthy of entering the first *Boboon* of purification, but be again compelled to return to the lowest region of punishment. Hence it is, that not only mournings and lamentation ensue on the violent death of either cow or calf, but the proprietor is frequently enjoined, and oftener voluntarily undertakes a three years’ pilgrimage in expiation of his crime, forsaking his family, friends, and relations.” §

It is a rule with the *Hindoos* that nothing must be left of the sacrifice *sradha* (which is to the manes of their ancestors) ; and when the company present cannot consume all that is offered, the *Institutes of Menu* say, “ Let him cause a cow, a priest, a kid, or the fire, to devour what remains of the cakes, or let him cast them into the waters.” ||

Much use is made of the ashes of cow-dung in the *Hindoo* ritual. “ They are thought to be of a holy nature,” says F. *Bouchet*, “ and the *Hindoos* sprinkle their foreheads, and both their shoulders and breasts with them every morning. Those ashes are daily offered to the gods, and the *Joguis* seldom fail to have a good stock of them, in order to distribute them among their devotees, who always reward them very liberally with alms. The *Joguis* also affect to

* *Instit.* p. 330. (P.) Ch. xi. 166 ; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 110, 111.

† *Instit.* p. 336. (P.) Ch. xi. 213 ; *Jones*, VIII. p. 119.

‡ *Instit.* p. 335. (P.) Ch. xi. 203 ; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 117, 118.

§ *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 74. (P.)

|| *Instit.* p. 85. (P.) Ch. iii. 260 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 196.

cover their faces and bodies with these ashes, and also scatter them over their idols. In the courts of several princes certain persons are appointed to present these ashes diluted with a little water, and laid on the leaves of the *Indian fig-tree*. This ceremony is performed publicly, and in the morning, in order that the devotees may partake of this salutary unction.* Whenever the king, or *Samorin*, of *Calicut* goes to pay his devotion in the pagod, all the way in which he passes is purified with fresh cow-dung. This being done, two women walk before him, carrying two vessels full of this cow-dung, diluted with water, and sprinkle it before him.†

In *Malabar*, this purifying water is sprinkled on the forehead, as a preservative against misfortune, on a great annual festival, and the ceremonies used in preparing and using these ashes are curious. They are thus related by a *Malabarian*: “We take a cow all over black, and fed not with grass, but with green straw, and take her dung, and repeating some formulary of prayers we form it into lumps, and during four or five days dry it in the shade, and then in the sun, till it is hardened. Then they” (the *Bramans*) “take it to a holy place (*famous for miracles done there by Ischuren*) called *Tschiwadalangöl*, and lay a great deal of chaff in that place, and put fire to it, and when the fire is quenched, they take the ashes in a vessel, and with some formulary of words they sprinkle it with water, and stir it, sift it three times through a cloth, and make it again into lumps, which they dry, and season it with all sorts of odiferous blooms or flowers, and bring before their idol, and make use of it in all sorts of offerings. This is the *Dirunamun*, or ashes prepared by the *Bramans* and other priests.”‡

The manner of using this water is as follows: “First the man washes all his body with great devotion, then takes the ashes in his hand, reciting devoutly the prayer *Namatschiwaia*, and other forms learned of their priests, and likewise takes up in his hand some drops of water, and washes his body therewith, repeating a form of prayer. And if it is in the morning, he turns his face towards the East, and if in the afternoon he turns it towards the West. Then he takes the ashes in both his hands, and rubs it together, directing his thoughts in the meanwhile to God, and besmears his head with it, and the person thinks of the

* *Religious Ceremonies*, p. 391. (P.)

† *Ibid.* (P.)

‡ *Phillips's Account*, p. 105. (P.)

god *Tschivens* in particular, and besmears his forehead with the same mixture. And the third time he directs his thoughts to *Ruddiren*,* and anoints his breast. The fourth time he thinks of *Wischtnu*, and anoints the navel. The fifth time he anoints his back, addressing his contemplation to *Bruma*, besmearing likewise the neck, knees and the arms. And all this anointing is to keep off *Emadudakol*, (or the messenger of hell,) who comes to fetch away the dead, which is effectually done" [says the *Malabarian*] "as we believe, if we repeat the prayer twenty times that we have learned of our priest. When this action is ended, one sings a hymn in the praise of some idol that he has chosen then for the object of his devotion, either in one's own house, or by a river's side."†

In the books of *Moses* (*Numb.* xix.), directions are given to prepare a water of purification with the ashes of a red heifer,‡ which may be compared with this similar practice of the *Hindoos*. The heifer was to be all red, a colour held in abhorrence by the *Hindoos*, as it was by the *Egyptians*, and cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet wool, were to be burned along with it. The whole of the heifer was to be burned, and not the dung only; and the ashes, dissolved in water, were to be used for the purpose of purification, after pollution occasioned by the touch of a dead body. I own I am not able to assign reasons for the several articles of this ritual, but the particulars of which it consists are much fewer than those of the *Hindoos*, and have in them much less that has the appearance of being arbitrary; and the use of the water was much more simple. In general much more use was always made of symbols in the *East*, than with us, and both *water* and *ashes* are natural symbols of cleansing, because they are used for that purpose. The choice of a *red* heifer was probably in opposition to the idea of the Heathens, who abominated that colour, and preferred black. *Cedar wood* and *hyssop* were used as cleansers of wounds, as was the plant *coccus*, which was used for dying scarlet or purple. All the articles, therefore, bore some relation to the purpose of cleansing. Why all the persons employed in the preparation of these ashes should be considered as *unclean*, I do not see.

* There is perhaps some mistake in this, since *Ruddiren*, is only another name for the deity that is called *Tchiven*, *Chib*, or *Sieb*, the third in the *Hindoo* system; though they might think it of use to meditate on the different names of the same god." (P.)

† Phillips's *Account*, pp. 106, 107. (P.)

‡ See Vol. XI. pp. 247, 248.

Such being the veneration which the *Hindoos* have for cows, we do not wonder at the penances enjoined for killing them, though they may be thought disproportionate to the crimes. I shall, as one of the most curious articles in the Hindoo system, copy what follows on the subject in the *Institutes of Menu*: “ He who has committed the smaller offence of killing a cow *without malice*, must drink for the first month barley-corns boiled soft in water ; his head must be shaved entirely, and, covered with the hide of the slain cow, he must fix his abode on her late pasture ground. He may eat a moderate quantity of *wild grains*, but without any factitious salt, for the next two months, at the time of each fourth repast, *on the evening of every second day*, regularly bathing in the urine of cows, and keeping his members under controul. All day he must wait on the herd, and stand quaffing the dust raised *by their hoofs* ; at night, having servilely attended, and stroked, and saluted them, he must surround them with a fence, and sit near *to guard* them. Pure, and free from passion, he must stand, while they stand ; follow them, when they move together ; and lie down by them, when they lie down. Should a cow be sick, or terrified by tigers, or thieves, or fall, or stick in mud, he must relieve her by all possible means. In heat, in rain, or in cold, or while the blast furiously rages, let him not seek his own shelter, without first sheltering the cows to the utmost of his power. Neither in his own house, or field, or floor for treading out grain, nor in those of any other person, let him say a word of a cow who eats *corn or grass*, or of a calf which drinks *milk*. By waiting on a herd, according to these rules, for three months, the slayer of a cow atones for his guilt. *But*, his penance being performed, he must give ten cows and a bull, or, his stock not being so large, must deliver all he possesses to such as best know the *Véda*.*” For killing a cow with malice there is not any mode of expiation whatever. The murderer must suffer death.

Of the purgatory power of *fire* nothing need be added, after what has been related [p. 250—252] of the burning of widows with the bodies of their husbands, and of some men being laid on the funeral pile before they are quite dead. It is not, however, common fire, or that which is used for culinary purposes, that has this virtue. “ Mr. Wilkins informs us that the Brahmans are enjoined to light up a

* *Instit.* p. 322. (P.) Ch. xi. 109—117 ; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 101, 102.

fire, at certain times, which must be produced by the friction of two pieces of wood of a particular kind; that with a fire thus procured their sacrifices are burnt; the nuptial altar flames; and the funeral pile is kindled.”*

Their observances relating to *fire* are numerous, and several of them have been noticed. I only add here the following directions given to a student in the *Institutes of Menu*: “Having taken a legal staff to his liking, and standing opposite to the sun, let the student thrice walk round the fire from left to right, and perform, according to law, the ceremony of asking food.”†

On the subject of purification by *water*, I shall be more particular, having noted more circumstances of their superstitious respect for this element.

I have given an account [pp. 253, 254] of persons choosing to die in rivers, especially the *Ganges*, on the idea that the soul passing through the water, as it leaves the body, is purged from its impurities. One of the travellers who describes this says, that “those who are far distant from it satisfy themselves with drinking a little of the water before they die,—and believe that they are fully purged from all their crimes by so doing. There come people” he says, “often from remote places to carry it into their own country, and furnish their principal *pagods* with it. I saw once,” he says, “pass through *Pondicherry*, (which is distant at least three hundred leagues from it,) a little *Caravan* of these *Devotos*, who had many great pots garnished with *rattain*, and filled with the water of the *Ganges*. These poor wretches guarded them with great care, and extraordinary respect, and they had still a great part of their way to go before they got home.

“They have not only,” he adds, “a veneration for *Ganges*, which they always look upon as most holy, and which they pretend to be no less than a *Deity*; but they reverence in general all rivers; and the *Devotos* among them take care, before they put their foot in water to take some of it, and wash their hands with it, making at the same time a short prayer to the Gods. This custom,” he observes, “is very ancient, and *Hesiod* recommends it.”‡

The ceremony of bathing in rivers, and the prayers which

* *Sketches*, I. pp. 233, 234. (P.)

† *Instit.* p. 23. (P.) Ch. ii. 48; *Jones*, VII. p. 119.

‡ *Oper. et Dier.* L. ii. “Agreement of Customs between the East Indians and Jews,” pp. 53, 54. This work, though not acknowledged, appears to have been a translation from the French.

are used on that occasion, are thus described by Mr. Lord : “ The ceremony observed in their washings is this. First, to besmear their bodies in the mud of the river,—then walking into the river, and turning their faces towards the sun, the *Bramane* utters this prayer: ‘ O Lord, this man is foul and polluted, as the clay or mud of this river, but the water thereof can purge off the defilement ; do thou, in like manner, cleanse away his sin.’ So diving and plunging himself three times in the river, whilst the *Bramane* iterateth the name of the river wherein he washeth,—with the names of other rivers in *India* celebrated for these customary washings—the party shaking in his hand certain grains of rice, as his offering on the water, receiving absolution for sins past, is there dismissed.”* F. *Bouchet* also says, that it is the belief of the *Hindoos* that bathing in certain rivers will infallibly wash away every sin ; that it not only cleanses the body but purifies the soul.”†

This veneration for *water*, as well as *fire*, was as great among the ancient *Persians*, and continues to be so with the modern *Parsis*. *Herodotus* says that the *Persians* never spit, or make water, or wash themselves, in a river, nor throw any ordure into it.‡ “ Water which is consecrated to certain ceremonies is,” by the *Parsis*, “ called *Jeschtee water*, and is supposed to have a particular virtue, which gives it an influence even over the soul.”§

Niebuhr says the modern *Parsis* never extinguish a fire by blowing it out, lest they should pollute the purity of that element by their breath. In the travels collected by *Dela-porte*, it is said they employ earth, but never water, to extinguish fire ; and that the greatest misfortune that can befall them is to let the fire in the house go out, so as to have occasion to get more from their neighbours.||

With the *Hebrews* there was a fire kept constantly burning for the purpose of sacrificing, because there was constant use for it ; but fire in general, as one of the elements of nature, was never considered by them as an object of veneration. With respect to water, also, frequent bathing was enjoined them ; but they had no idea of the sanctifying nature of water, as affecting the mind. There was no concourse of people to bathe in the river *Jordan*, or any particular river, as having more virtue than another.

* *Discoverie of the Banian Religion*, p. 57.

† *Religious Ceremonies*, p. 383. (P.) ‡ *Clio*, (L. i.), cxxxviii. (P.)

§ *Zendavesta*, in *New Ann. Reg.* (1762,) V. p. 117. (P.)

|| *Voyages*, III. p. 102. (P.)

The *Israelites* were likewise free from the superstition of pilgrimages on that, or any other account. They were required to resort to one place at their public festivals, but it was for the obvious purpose of preserving the unity of the nation, and the national worship; and the whole country being of no great extent, this intercourse was easily preserved. There was nothing of superstition in this, because it was not always to the same place. In the Wilderness the place of worship was a moveable tabernacle, in *Palestine* it was first at *Shiloh*, and afterwards at *Jerusalem*, that place being the most convenient, as being the metropolis of the country.

M. *Sonnerat* says, the Jews ascribed a divine virtue to the *fountain of youth*, but he refers to no authority for this strange assertion, nor does he say where this extraordinary fountain was. One would think that he had been reading the *Arabian Tales*, and mistook that book for the *Bible*.

M. *Boullanger* says, "religion must have rendered the fountain of Siloe respectable by the Hebrews, because it was near that fountain that they went to consecrate their kings. See," he says, "1 Kings i. 38."* Now the only mention of the consecration of any king near that place was that of *Solomon*, and no mention is made of the fountain, or of any water, on the occasion. It is only said that they went to *Gihon*, and, in the maps of *Jerusalem*, there is both a hill and a fountain in that place, and the fountain is supposed to be the same that is elsewhere called *Siloe*. Solomon was anointed with oil, but no intimation is given of the sacredness of the place in which the ceremony was performed, whether it was on the hill, or in the valley. It is probable they went out of the city with no other view than to prevent the transaction being known to *Adonijah* and his friends, and to return in a princely cavalcade when the ceremony was over; and for any thing that appears in the history, any other place near the city would have answered the purpose just as well. On such slight foundations do many *unbelievers* found their objections to the religion of the *Hebrews*, in order to make out something like a similarity between it and what must be allowed to be absurd in that of the Heathens, when no two things which had the same object could be more unlike, the one being a perfect contrast to the other.

* *L'Antiquité Devoilée*, L. i., Ch. ii., Note. (P.) "La fontaine de Siloë étoit hors des murs de Jérusalem: il falloit que la religion la rendit respectable aux Hébreux, puisque c'étoit près de cette fontaine qu'ils alloient faire la sacre de leur rois. Voyez L. iii. des Rois, Ch. i. 38." *Œuvres de Boullanger*, 1792, I. p. 51.

SECTION XVIII.

Of the licentious Rites of the Hindoo and other ancient Religions.

THE serious consequences of adopting erroneous principles, even such as are commonly called *metaphysical ones*, seemingly the most remote from practice, is perhaps in nothing more apparent than with respect to the ideas which were in early ages entertained concerning *nature*, when its attributes came to be objects of worship. As there must be a concurrence of *male* and *female* powers for the production of all living creatures, it was supposed that, in the great productive powers of nature, there must be both male and female qualities. The *Egyptians* had this idea, and accordingly several of their principal deities were said to be both male and female. And, having little idea of delicacy, which is the product of refinement, they represented those powers by the figures of the parts of generation. But the constant exhibition of these figures in their religious worship could not but lead to much lewdness, first as an act of religion, acceptable to their gods, and then in common life; though this might be far from the intention of those who formed the plan of the popular worship.

Hence, however, it is that, in the ancient *Heathen* religions, we find rites of the most opposite nature; the extreme of severity and cruelty in some, and the extreme of indecency and sensual indulgence in others. This is well known to have been the case in *Egypt*, which was the mother of religion and of science, to a great part of the *Western* world. We cannot, without the utmost disgust and horror, think of what, according to the testimony of *Herodotus*, whose authority in this case cannot be questioned, women did before the bull *Apis*, and especially with the goat that was worshipped at *Mendes*, to say nothing of the peculiarly indecent manner in which he says that, in their religious processions, they carry the *phalli*, and of their behaviour, when, in some of their festivals they went in boats along the *Nile*, and exhibited themselves to the inhabitants of the villages on the borders of it.* The *Nile* itself, according to the testimony of Christian writers, was worshipped with the most obscene and execrable rites, even Sodomitical practices.†

* *Euterpe*, L. ii.

† *Jablonski*, Pt. ii. p. 172; *Eusebii Vita Constantini*, L. iv. C. xxv. (P.)

The idea that *Plutarch* gives us of the *Egyptian* rites is sufficiently disgusting. "Many of their religious solemnities," he says, "were of a mournful cast, and celebrated with much austerity. Some of their festivals and direful sacrifices were considered as unfortunate and mournful days, and were celebrated by eating raw flesh, torn with men's nails. On other days they fast, and smite their breasts, and in several places filthy and indecent words are used during the sacrifices. They lay a strict charge," he says, "upon such as go down to the oracle, to have pious thoughts in their hearts, and words of good sound in their mouths. But the greater part act ludicrous things in their processions and festivals, first proclaiming good expressions, and then both speaking and thinking words of most lewd and wicked meaning, and that even of the gods themselves."*

No revels of the most irreligious persons could be more extravagant and indecent than the festivals of *Bacchus*;† and the same people who sacrificed men, and even their own children, had places appropriated to prostitution, even of both sexes, adjoining to their temples, the profits arising from which were a part of their revenues.

The *Hindoo* religion is little, if at all, less exceptionable than the ancient *Egyptian* in this respect. "Nothing," says *La Croze*, "is more revered by the Hindoos than the *lingam*. Their most solemn worship is presented to their gods in this form."‡ "Lighted lamps are continually burning before it, in the inmost recesses of their temples, surrounded by other lamps with seven branches, like that of the Hebrews. Besides those in the temples, they have small ones of stone or crystal, which they hang to their necks, and fasten upon their heads. To these they address almost all their prayers, and frequently have them buried with them."§

Captain Campbell, after describing the lascivious dancing of Hindoo girls, who get their living by it, says, "that such

* *De Iside et Osiride. (P.) Morals, IV. p. 148.*

† See Vol. XI. pp. 18, 19.

‡ *Histoire, II. p. 275. (P.) "C'est à cette idole monstrueuse, que se rapporte leur culte le plus religieux : et les Bramines se sont réservé à eux seuls le privilège de pouvoir lui présenter des offrandes." Ibid. p. 276. See supra, pp. 149, 172, 202.*

§ *Histoire, II. p. 276. (P.) "Une lampe allumée brûle continuellement devant cette idole, environnée de plusieurs autres lampes à sept branches, entièrement semblables au chandelier des Juifs dont nous avons la figure dans l'arc triomphal de Titus.—Outre les Lingums de leurs temples, ils en portent souvent de plus petits faits de pierre ou de cristal. Ils les pendent à leur col, ou les attachent sur leur tête. C'est là qu'ils adressent presque toutes leurs prières, n'abandonnant jamais cette idole, qu'ils font souvent enterrer avec eux." Ibid. pp. 276, 277.*

enticements to vice should make a part of the system of any society is to be lamented: yet, at all ceremonies and great occasions, whether of religious worship or domestic enjoyment, they make a part of the entertainment; and the altar of their gods, and the purity of the marriage rites, are alike polluted by the introduction of the dancing girls. The impurity of this custom, however, vanishes in India, when compared with the hideous practice of introducing dancing boys.”*

He gives the following account of the celebrated *Jagranaut Pagoda*, which he calls a “curious and grotesque monument of superstitious folly. It is,” he says, “an immense, barbarous structure, of a kind of pyramidal form,† embellished with devices cut in stone work, not more singular than disgusting. Christian idolaters, in forming types and figures of divine beings, always endeavour to represent them with personal beauty, as proportionate to their divine nature as human skill can make them. Those Pagans, on the contrary, in forming their idols, cast out every vestige of beauty, every thing that by the consent of mankind is supposed to convey pleasing sensations, and in their place substitute the most extravagant, unnatural deformity, the most loathsome nastiness, the most disgusting obscenity. It is not in language to convey an adequate idea of their temples and idols; and if it was, no purpose could be answered by it, only the excitement of painful and abominable sensations.

“To keep pace with the figures of their idols, a chief Bramin, by some accursed, artificial means, (by herbs I believe,) has brought to a most unnatural form, and enormous dimensions, that which decency forbids me to mention; and the pure and spotless women, who from infancy have been shut up from the sight of men, even of their brothers, are brought to kiss this disgusting and misshapen monster, under the preposterous belief that it promotes fecundity.”‡

“In this pagoda,” Captain Campbell says, “stands the figure of *Jagranaut*,” but it is “nothing more than a black stone, in an irregular pyramidal form, having two rich

* “*Journey over Land to India*,” 8vo. 1797, p. 378. (P.) 4to. 1796, Pt. iii. p. 125.

† Mr. Hamilton describes this temple as [in 1708] in the shape of a *Canary* pipe set on end, about forty or fifty yards high; about the middle is the image of an ox, cut in one entire stone, bigger than a live one. (*New Account of the East Indies*, Edin. 1727, l. p. 382. (P.) See the plate, p. 386.

‡ *Journey*, p. 412 [1796, Pt. iii. pp. 165, 166]. *Tavernier* mentions the same abominable custom; as also does Alexander Hamilton in his *Account of the East Indies*, l. p. 152. (P.)

diamonds in the top by way of eyes, and a nose and mouth painted red. For this god," he says, "five hundred priests are daily employed in boiling food, which, as he seldom eats it, they doubtless convert to their own use in the evening."*

"Every pagoda," says *La Croze*, "has a certain number of prostitutes annexed to it, dedicated to its use by pompous and solemn ceremonies. They choose the handsomest, and educate them in such a manner, that when they come to a proper age they may bring the greatest gain to the temple by the price of their prostitution. They can never marry, or leave the idol;"† and their children, if they have any, are also dedicated to it.

Some, says Mr. William Chambers, devote their own children to this profession. This is customary in the *Decan*, but not with the *Hindoos of Bengal* or *Indostan Proper*. He says this custom was probably derived from the religion of *Budda*. But almost all the ancient Heathen religions had the same custom. It is described at large by *Herodotus*, as it was practised at *Babylon* in his time;‡ and it is frequently alluded to in the *Old Testament*. *Lucian*, in his *Treatise on the Syrian Goddess*, says, that those women who refuse to cut off their hair on her festival must prostitute themselves during one day;§ and that what they receive on that account is given to the goddess for a sacrifice. In *Malabar* it is reckoned meritorious to bring up girls, who are commonly bastards, for the service of the temples, and they are taught music and dancing. When they are of a proper age, they go through the ceremony of a marriage to the god.||

Whether it was owing to customs of this kind, or a

* *Journey*, 1791, Pt. iii. p. 166.

† *Histoire*, II. pp. 315, 316. (*P.*) "Chaque pagode en a un certain nombre, plus ou moins grand, selon sa réputation, ou selon ses revenus. On les destine fort jeunes au culte des idoles par une dédicace qui se fait avec beaucoup de pompe et de solennité. Elles sont élevées avec soin aux dépens de la pagode.—On choisit ordinairement les plus belles filles qui se trouvent, afin que parvenues en âge elles puissent subsister et enrichir le temple des revenus de leur prostitution.—Ces malheureuses créatures ne peuvent abandonner l'idole à laquelle elles sont consacrées. Le mariage leur est entièrement interdit." *Ibid*.

‡ *Clio* (L. i.), cxcix.

§ "In the public market place." *Franklin's Lucian*, 1781, IV. p. 354.

|| *Phillips's Account*, p. 101. (*P.*) This ceremony takes place when they are "nine or ten years of age.—Being arrived to the age of marriage," the *Malabarian* says, "they are married, in appearance, the second time, observing all the usual marriage ceremonies, an after this they lead the most scandalous lives, prostituting themselves to all comers, by keeping public stews; for the order forbids them lawful marriage." *Ibid*. pp. 101, 102.

natural simplicity of manners that prevailed in early times, the writings of the ancient *Greeks* and *Romans* have not the decency of modern compositions. But it is probable that the writings of the *Hindoos* are still more censurable in this respect, since M. *Langles*, the admirer of this system, has not thought proper to translate certain passages of the *Heetopades*, because he says, "they are so gross that it is not possible to give them a decent colouring."*

In many countries it has been thought necessary to connive at prostitution; and certain places in cities have been allowed where prostitutes might live unmolested; but in no part of the world are such indications of its being considered as a lawful occupation as in *Hindustan*. For there, in case of a debt, the creditor cannot take from a prostitute any thing that is necessary to set off her person to advantage, any more than he can take from another the necessary implements of his trade.†

To *Hebrew* women prostitution was in all cases absolutely forbidden; but, in allusion to the practice of the *Heathens*, more especially as an act of religion. Their custom of having places of prostitution in the precincts of their temples is more than once alluded to in the writings of *Moses*, but always with the greatest abhorrence, as unworthy of the purity of the religion that he taught. *Deut.* xxiii. 17, 18: "There shall be no *harlot* of the daughters of Israel, nor a Sodomite of the sons of Israel. Thou shalt not bring the hire of a *harlot*—into the house of the Lord thy God."‡ Though there are in the Scriptures such expressions as we should not now choose to make use of,§ they do not go beyond that simplicity which is perfectly consistent with the greatest purity of manners; and to this the greatest possible attention was paid in every part of the system. In the *New Testament* the customs of the *Heathens*, in these respects, are frequently alluded to, but always with cautions to Christians to keep at the greatest distance from them,

* *Langles*, p. 177. (P.)

† *Gentoo Laws*, p. 273. (P.) "If a dancing girl (or common prostitute) commits such crime as that all her property becomes liable to confiscation, the magistrate, giving to her her cloth, or carpet, for sitting, her clothes, jewels, and a place of abode, shall confiscate all the rest of her effects: in the same manner, to a soldier, shall be given his implements of war; and to a man exercising any profession, the implements of that profession shall be exempted from the confiscation of all the rest of his property." *Ibid.*

‡ See Vol. XI. p. 289.

§ *Tillotson* has, somewhere, a similar remark, where he is speaking of passages in the Bible, now regarded as *too naturally* expressed. Hence he deduces the propriety of a judicious selection, for the early instruction of children.

SECTION XIX.

Of Charms and Fortunate Times.

THE deplorable ignorance of the *Heathen* world in general, in early ages, is in nothing more apparent than in their belief and practice with respect to *charms*, or their opinion that wonderful effects may be produced by the use of certain forms of words and ceremonies, which, however, have not the least connexion with them, or dependence upon them. A great part of all the *Heathen* religions consisted of things of this nature; since they believed that the powers of superior beings, residing in the heavenly bodies, and other parts of nature, which were the objects of their worship, might be effectually engaged, and made subservient to them by this means.

The religion of the *Greeks*, derived in a great measure from *Egypt*, and also that of the *Romans*, derived from the *Hetruscans*, abounded with things of this nature, while that of the *Hebrews* was so entirely free from every thing of the kind, that to persons acquainted with antiquity, and, indeed, with human nature, there can hardly be a more striking proof of the divine origin of their religion. How came this one nation to be so great an exception from all others in this respect? How came they to have nothing at all of that which to men of sense, at this day, must make all other ancient religions perfectly contemptible? What advantage can it be said that *Moses*, or any of his nation, had for so much superior good sense, and so much more knowledge of the powers of nature? The *Israelites* must naturally have been as prone to this wretched superstition as other people, and their addictedness to it actually appears by their readiness to abandon their own religion, which was free from it, and to embrace that of their neighbours, which was loaded with it. Thus we read concerning king *Manassch* (2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 2, 3, 6): “He did evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the *Heathen*, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of *Israel*. For he built again the high places which *Hezekiah* his father had broken down, and he reared up altars for *Baal*, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them.—And he caused his children to pass through the fire in the valley of the son of *Hinnom*. Also he observed times, and used

enchantments, and used witchcraft, and dealt with a familiar spirit, and with wizzards."

We see here the intimate connexion that always subsisted between idolatry and these superstitious observances. They make an essential part of all the Heathen religions. Let us now hear what *Moses* says with respect to them. *Deut.* xviii. 10—14: "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination, or any observer of times, or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizzard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination to the Lord; and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God. For these nations, *whose country* thou shalt possess, hearkened unto observers of times, and unto diviners; but as for thee, the Lord thy God hath not suffered thee so to do."* Do we not here see a most striking difference between the opinions and practices of the *Heathens* and those of the *Hebrews*; and need I say on which side is reason and good sense, and on which an absurd superstition, the offspring of the most deplorable ignorance?

A belief in charms is not confined to the vulgar among the *Hindoos*; it is authorized by their sacred books, and professed by their learned *Bramins*. The *Vedas* contain "horrid incantations for the *destruction* of enemies."† The *Gâyatri*, so often mentioned already, is used in one of these charms, consisting, as we are told, of "incantations in verses aptly framed and variously measured."‡ The *Yantra*, as we are informed by a chief magistrate of *Benares*, is "a scheme of figures, which they write, with a belief that their wishes will be accomplished by it." *Tantra*, is "a medical preparation by the use of which" they think that "all injuries may be avoided; for they are said to rub it on their hands, and afterwards to touch red-hot iron without being burned."§

The learned Pundits, who compiled the *Code of Gentoo Laws*, say, "The magistrate shall keep many intelligent physicians and magicians, or men who cure by spells."|| The *Institutes of Menu* say of a king, "Let him eat lawful aliment, after it has been proved innocent, *by certain experiments*, and hallowed by texts of the *Vêda*, repulsive of

* See Vol. XI. pp. 283, 284.

† *Ibid.* p. 100. (P.)

Pref. p. cxviii. (P.)

‡ *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 106. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* pp. 92, 93. (P.)

poison.—Let him constantly wear with attention such gems as are known to repel venom.”* In the same work we read, that “a *Bráhmén* may use, without hesitation, the powerful charms revealed to AT’HARVAN, and by him to ANGIRAS; for speech is the weapon of a *Bráhmén*: with that he may destroy his oppressors.”†

Some *Hindoos* in *Malabar* carry about them a word consisting of “five letters,” signifying, “Praise the true God. With these letters they pretend to produce many wonders and mysteries.”‡ They believe that by certain rites “the conjurer can engage the assistance of some of their “tutelar gods and goddesses,—cause the headache,—break the leg or arm of any man,—make men out of their senses,—till at last they lose their lives.”§

But the most curious account that I have any where met with concerning the power of charms, is that which Mr. Richardson relates|| of the process by which the *Parsis* expel the demon they call *Daroudj Nesosch*. It is in a dialogue between *Ormuzd* (Omnipotence) and *Zerdusht*, or *Zoroaster*, who desires to be informed “how a man should get rid of a demon, supposing him, in shape of a fly, to have taken possession of the crown of his head. *Ormuzd* directs him to wash the part, which will drive the fiend between the eyebrows: from thence he is to be forced, by another ablution, to the back of the head; from that to the ear, then to the nose, the mouth, the chin;” and at length to “the left foot;” when the following process is to be gone through: “When the water has reached to the top of the left foot it must be raised, letting the toes rest on the ground, and thus wash the under part of the right foot.” The demon then “retires under the left foot.” That being washed, he “places himself in the form of a fly, under the toes. Allowing the sole of the foot to rest on the ground, the toes must be raised, and those of the right foot washed.” He then “retires under those of the left foot, and when the toes of the left foot are washed,” he “is overthrown, and returns towards the North.”¶

* *Instit.* p. 107. (P.) Ch. vii. 217, 218; *Jones*, VII. p. 327.

† *Instit.* p. 311. (P.) Ch. xi. 33; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 86, 87.

‡ *Phillips's Account*, p. 21. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 147. (P.) “To these tutelar gods,” says the *Malabarian*, “we bring he-goats, swine, hens—eggs, strong liquors, and other eatables for offerings; then we vow to give twenty *perdous* (30 pence) to be equally divided among them.” *Ibid.* p. 146.

|| From Anquetil's *Zendavesta*, I. Pt. ii. p. 341.

¶ *Richardson's Dissert.* pp. 233, 234. (P.) “Lorsque l'eau a atteint le dessus du pied gauche, où se retire le *Daroudj Nesosch*? *Ormuzd* répondit: (le *Daroudj Nesosch*, sous la forme d'une mouche se place dessous le pied; il faut le lever, lais-

When men were ignorant of the true causes of events, and yet necessarily supposed that they must have *some* cause, they of course fixed on imaginary ones; and when the cause was not any thing that was visible to them, they supposed invisible agents to be concerned; and that they interposed at certain times, and in certain circumstances, rather than in others. Hence a great part of the religions of ancient nations consisted in superstitious observances respecting particular *times* and *circumstances*, on which they imagined good or bad success to depend. The religion of the *Hindoos* abounds with things of this nature; but I shall confine myself to the recital of a very few, as any person may see who shall peruse the *Institutes of Menu*.

All men naturally wish to live long and be happy, but few know how to secure these advantages. Let us then hear the wisdom of the East on this head. "Let not a man, who desires to enjoy long life, stand upon hair, nor upon ashes, bones, or potsherds, nor upon seeds of cotton, nor upon husks of grain."* Compare this with what we find in the Psalms of *David* on the same subject. *Psalm* xxxiv. 12—16: "What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days that he may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile. Depart from evil, and do good: seek peace and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry. The face of the Lord is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth."

The future happiness of a child is supposed by the *Hindoos* to depend on the prevailing influence of the planets at the time of its birth. This, however, is a circumstance that men cannot command; but the time of giving a child its name they can, and they suppose that much depends upon this. "On the tenth day after the birth of the child, the relations are assembled to assist at the ceremony of giving it a name. The *Brahmans* proceed to examine the planets; and if they be found unfavourable, the ceremony is deferred, and sacrifices performed to avert misfortune."† On this

sant les doigts poser à terre, et laver ainsi le dessous du pied droit. Lorsque l'on a lavé le dessous du pied droit, le Daroudj Nesosch se retire sous le pied gauche. Lorsque l'on a lavé le dessous du pied gauche, le Daroudj Nesosch sous la forme d'une mouche, se place dessous les doigts. Laisant donc (poser à terre) le dessous du pied, on leve les doigts, et on lave ceux du pied droit. Lorsque l'on a lavé les doigts du pied droit, le Daroudj Nesosch se retire sous ceux du pied gauche; et lorsqu'on a lavé les doigts du pied gauche, le Daroudj Nesosch est renversé, vaincu et s'en retourne du côté du Nord." *Ibid.*

* *Instit.* p. 98. (P.) Ch. iv. 78; *Jones*, VII. p. 214.

† *Sketches*, II. p. 11. (P.)

subject the *Institutes of Menu* say, "Let the father *perform, or if absent, cause to be performed*, on the tenth or twelfth day *after the birth*, the ceremony of giving a name; or on some fortunate day of the moon, at a lucky hour, and under the influence of a star with good qualities."*

Both the benedictions and the imprecations of certain persons have been thought to have a great effect; and contemptuously as the *Hindoos* think of women, they suppose that, in this respect, even they have great power. "On whatever houses," say the *Institutes of Menu*, "the women of a family, not being duly honoured, pronounce an imprecation, those houses, with all that belong to them, utterly perish, as if destroyed by a sacrifice for the death of an enemy. Let those women therefore, be continually supplied with ornaments, apparel, and food, at festivals and jubilees, by men desirous of wealth."†

The superstitious observances respecting the Bramins are the most numerous and fanciful, far beyond our western conception. I shall recite a few taken promiscuously from the *Institutes of Menu*: "If he (the student) seek long life, he should eat with his face to the East; if exalted fame, to the South; if prosperity, to the West; if truth and its reward, to the North."‡ "What a *Bráhmén* eats with his head covered, what he eats with his face to the South, what he eats with sandals on his feet, the demons assuredly devour. Let not a *Chandála*, a town boar, a cock, a dog, a woman in her courses, or an eunuch, see the *Bráhméns* eating. That which any one of them sees at the oblation to fire, at a solemn donation of cows and gold, at a repast given to *Bráhméns*, at holy rites to the gods, and at obsequies to ancestors, produces not the intended fruit. The boar destroys it by his smell; the cock, by the air of his wings; the dog, by the cast of a look; the man of the lowest class, by the touch."§

"He (the priest) must not gaze on the sun, whether rising or setting, or eclipsed, or reflected in water, or advanced to the middle of the sky. Over a string to which a calf is tied let him not step; nor let him run while it rains; nor let him look on his own image in water: this is a settled rule. By a mound of earth, by a cow, by an idol, by a *Bráhmén*, by a pot of clarified butter, or of honey, by a place where four

* *Instit.* p. 21. (P.) Ch. ii. 30; *Jones*, VII. p. 116.

† *Instit.* p. 59. (P.) Ch. iii. 58, 59; *Jones*, VII. p. 162, 163.

‡ *Instit.* p. 23. (P.) Ch. ii. 52; *Jones*, VII. p. 119.

§ *Instit.* p. 82. (P.) Ch. iii. 238—241; *Jones*, VII. pp. 192, 193.

ways meet, and by large trees well known in the district, let him pass with his right hand towards them.—Let him neither eat with his wife, nor look at her eating,* or sneezing, or yawning, or sitting carelessly at her ease.”†

The restrictions that *Bráhmens* are under with respect to the voiding of their excrements are very numerous. [Among them are the following: “Nor let him ever eject them, looking at *things moved by* the wind, or at fire, or at a priest, or at the sun, or at water, or at cattle:—by day let him void them with his face to the North; by night, with his face to the South; at sun rise and sun set, in the same manner as by day.—Of him who should urine against fire, against the sun, or the moon, against a twice-born man, a cow, or the wind, all the sacred knowledge would perish.”‡

A *Bráhmen* “must never cut his own hair and nails, nor even tear his nails with his teeth.—He who *idly* breaks clay, or cuts grass, or bites his nails, will speedily sink to ruin.”§

As to prognostics of good or bad success, a great number of them, as observed by the *Hindoos* of *Malabar*, may be seen in Mr. Phillips’s *Account*. “A lucky day” being first chosen, he “says, ‘this project of mine will meet with good success,’ when he goes out of doors; after this, he observes all that meets him, or happens to him, very scrupulously. If he happens to sneeze, he turns in the book of prognostication to the chapter of sneezing; if a crow croaks, to the chapter of crows, or birds; and, in general, it is interpreted as a very bad sign [says the *Malabarian*] if a blind man, a *Braman*, or a washerwoman, meets one in the way; as also when one meets a man with an empty *Panel*, or when one sees an oil mill, or if a man meets us with his head uncovered, or when one hears a weeping voice, or sees a fox crossing the way, or a dog running on his right hand, or when a poor man meets us in our way, or when a cat crosses our way.—Moreover, when an earthen-pot-maker, or widow, meets us, we interpret it in the worse sense. When one sprains his foot, falls on his head, or is called back, presently the professors of these sciences are consulted, and they presently turn to the proper chapter for such a sign, and give the interpretation of it.”§

The reason for these observances is to be looked for in the

* *Instit.* p. 94. (P.) Ch. iv. 37—39, 43; *Jones*, VII. pp. 208, 209.

† *Instit.* p. 95. (P.) Ch. iv. 48, 50, 52; *Jones*, VII. pp. 209, 210.

‡ *Instit.* p. 98. (P.) Ch. iv. 69, 71; *Jones*, VII. p. 213.

§ *Account*, pp. 135, 136. (P.)

idea which the ancients in general had of the interference of "one or more intelligent causes" in the usual course of nature. Hence it was considered as "the organ or instrument of the divinity," and "a kind of book, in which they thought they could read his will, inclinations and designs." Hence they regarded "a thousand indifferent phenomena, such as the quivering of leaves, the crackling and colour of flames, the fall of thunderbolts, the flight or singing of a bird, men's involuntary motions, their dreams and visions, the movements of the pulse, &c., as intimations which the God gave, to wise men, of his will. Hence came oracles, divinations, auspices, presages and lots, in a word, all that rubbish of dark superstitions called at one time religion, and at another magic."*

Herodotus says, the *Egyptians* had more prodigies than other people, and that they ascribed the art of divination to no mortal, but only to the gods.†

In the institutions of the *Hebrews* we find nothing of this kind, but on the contrary they are treated with deserved contempt, as they were observed by the Heathen nations in their neighbourhood. And what could *Moses* know more than the *Egyptians* or the *Hindoos*, whose superior knowledge in other respects is unquestioned? The *Hindoos*, from about the time of *Moses*, could calculate eclipses, and had attained the rudiments of other branches of knowledge, which made them be looked up to by all nations who were acquainted with them, with the greatest veneration; and we are even now astonished at their attainments in so early a period, while the *Israelites* were not, in the time of *Moses*, distinguished for knowledge of any kind. Whence, then, came their superior good sense with respect to their religious institutions? The religion of the wiser nation we see to be absurd in the extreme, while that of the rude and ignorant appears truly admirable at this day; and the more it is studied in this advanced age of the world, to the more advantage, I am confident, it will appear, especially when compared with systems of equal antiquity in the same part of the world.‡

* Mallet's *North. Antiq.* I. pp. 109, 110. (P.)

† *Euterpe* (L. ii.), lxxxii. lxxxiii. (P.)

‡ "The philosopher may view with surprise, and the friend of Revelation with triumph, the singular exception from universal depravity, which we find in the Jewish people. That people had no pretensions to superior learning, or genius, or humanity; on the contrary, they were rude, indocile, and barbarous; but in whatever regarded religious truth, and the character of the Deity, they far outstripped their contemporaries. Their theology was pure and sublime. It bore upon it the stamp of heaven." *Miscellanies*, (by T. Christie,) 1789, p. 323.

SECTION XX.

Of Trial by Ordeal.

WHEN nothing serious in the conduct of life depends upon erroneous opinions, we may smile at them, or when in consequence of them persons only give themselves needless trouble. But when their conduct towards others, in civil and even in criminal cases, is influenced by absurd notions, it is not a little alarming; and the history of all countries, especially ancient ones, shews of what importance it is to form a just judgment with respect to things which at first sight seem to bear no relation to practice. A superstitious respect for the elements of fire and water seems at first perfectly harmless, and while it only leads persons to bathe more than we think necessary, or with much trouble and expense keep up a fire for which we see no use, we are amused with them. But when we find that the same ideas which led to these harmless, through troublesome practices, led likewise to the drowning and burning alive of innocent persons, we find that they deserve a serious examination.

From a veneration for the elements of fire and water, and an opinion of there being something of divinity in them, or attending them, they have been deemed proper tests of guilt or innocence. Neither fire nor water, it was thought, would hurt an innocent person, when appealed to as an evidence of guilt or innocence; and hence have come the various modes of trial which have obtained the appellation of *ordeals*,* not only in cases in which credible testimony could not be procured, but even where it could; the judgment of these divinities being thought more safe than that of any man.

We now see the absurdity and mischievous consequences of this practice; but the experience of ages has not yet convinced the *Hindoos* of it, and trial by ordeal is as much in use among them as ever. In the *Preface* to the *Code of Gentoo Laws* it is said, that the “trial by ordeal is one of the most ancient institutes for the distinguishing criterion of guilt and innocence:”—“that the modes of this ordeal are various in India, according to the choice of the parties,

* See Vol. IX. pp. 235, 236, 251, 287, 288.

or the nature of the offence, but the infallibility of the result is to this day as implicitly believed, as it could have been in the darkest ages of antiquity.”*

In the *Asiatic Researches* there is a curious tract “on the Trial by Ordeal,” written by the “chief magistrate at Banares,” from which we learn, that there are “nine ways” of *ordeal* allowed by the Hindoo laws; and from considering them it will appear that there are only one or two of them in which an innocent person can have an equal chance of being acquitted. According to the first of these modes, the person accused is, after many ceremonies, too tedious to recite here, weighed, and then, his accusation in writing being put upon his head, he is weighed again “six minutes after;” when, “if he weigh more than before, he is held guilty, if less, innocent.”† In this case much will depend upon the weight of the paper containing the accusation, and the rest on his habit with respect to perspiration. A person dropsically inclined would stand a very poor chance.

In another of the modes of ordeal “the accused is made to drink three draughts of the water in which *certain images* have been washed for that purpose; and if, within fourteen days, he has any sickness or indisposition, his crime is considered as proved.”‡ In this case the chance of acquittal is at least equal to that of condemnation, if the person’s health was good.

All the other modes are by water, fire, or poison, in such a manner as that an innocent person has but little chance of escaping unhurt; and yet one of their *inspired legislators* “was of opinion, that though a theft or fraud could be proved by witnesses, the party accused might be tried by *ordeal*.”§ And “it is positively declared in the *Dherma Sâstra*, and in the written opinions of the most respectable *Pandits*, that the hand of a man who speaks truth cannot be burned.”||

The *Institutes of Menu* give their full sanction to this mode of trial. “He whom the blazing fire burns not, whom the water soon forces not up,¶ or who meets with no speedy misfortune, must be held veracious in his testimony on earth.” Of this an example is given: “Of the sage VÂTSA, whom his younger *half* brother formerly attacked, *as the son*

* Halhed’s *Pref.* pp. lv. lvi.

† *Dissert. on Asia*, II. p. 77. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 79. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 82. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 88. (P.)

¶ We see here the great antiquity of trying witches by throwing them into the water, when it was supposed that if they could not sink they were guilty. (P.)

of a servile woman, the fire which pervades the world, burned not even a hair, by reason of his perfect veracity.”*

The translator of the *Heetopades*, after observing that a woman accused of infidelity to her husband is required to plunge her hand into a vessel of hot water, oil, or melted lead, and that if she be injured by it she must be condemned, mentions as a thing of the same nature, the proof of adultery prescribed in the laws of *Moses*, (*Numb.* v. 11—31,) adding, “these modes of trial have been one of the first articles of the jurisprudence of people half civilized.”† But let the two cases be compared. As *M. Langles* has not done this, I shall endeavour to draw the comparison myself.

This was the only case in which any such mode of trial was had recourse to in the Hebrew system, and this was a case in which no evidence could be had, the husband being only able to allege his suspicions; and all that the accused wife had to fear was a real interposition of providence against her. She had nothing to apprehend from boiling water, hot oil, or melted lead, being only required to drink a little water containing some dust from the place in which she stood, which the priest took up in her presence, and that of her friends; and the priest may be supposed to have had no interest to serve by favouring either of the parties.‡

All the objection that can be made to the proceeding in these circumstances is, that the woman’s escaping unhurt was no proof of her innocence. But why should any person suffer against whom there was no evidence of guilt? In the *Hindoo* ordeal nothing but a miracle could save the accused; in this, nothing but a miracle could injure her. Violent and unreasonable jealousy is very common in the *East*; and such a method as this of quieting the mind of the suspicious husband might be of great use. Besides, this case of ordeal was of a piece with the general plan of the *Hebrew* government, as it was immediately superintended by God himself, and his interposition promised in many more cases than this.

* *Instit.* p. 204. (P.) Ch. viii. 115, 116; *Jones*, VII. p. 349, 350. These maxims of *Hindoo* jurisprudence, which immediately follow this passage, may serve to shew how intimately connected, in the *Institutes*, are wisdom and absurdity:

“Whenever false evidence has been given in any suit, the king must reverse the judgment; and whatever has been done, must be considered as undone. Evidence, given from covetousness, from distraction of mind, from terror, from friendship, from lust, from wrath, from ignorance, and from inattention, must be held invalid. A king, who inflicts punishment on such as deserve it not, and inflicts no punishment on such as deserve it, brings infamy on himself, while he lives, and shall sink, when he dies, to a region of torment.” Ch. viii. 117, 118, 128; *Jones*, VII. pp. 350—352.

† *Langles*, pp. 183, 185. (P.)

‡ See Vol. XI. pp. 228, 229.

SECTION XXI.

Of various Kinds of Superstition.

THE trial by *ordeal* is not the only case of superstition relating to courts of justice in the *Hindoo* system. The following among many others are deserving of notice :

“ An evidence in a court of justice must turn his face towards the eastern or northern quarter.”* The same is required in the *Institutes of Menu*.†

The rules for estimating the degrees of guilt incurred by giving false evidence in different cases are not a little curious: “ Hear, honest man,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “ from a just enumeration in order, how many kinsmen, in evidence of different sorts, a false witness kills, or incurs the guilt of killing. He kills five by false testimony concerning cattle in general; ten, concerning kine; a hundred, concerning horses; and a thousand, by false evidence concerning the human race. By speaking falsely in a cause concerning gold he kills the born and the unborn; by speaking falsely concerning land, he kills every thing animated: beware then of speaking falsely in a cause concerning land! The sages have held false evidence concerning water, and the possession or enjoyment of women, equal to false evidence concerning land; and it is equally criminal in causes concerning *pearls and other* precious things formed in water, and concerning all things made of stone.”‡

The penalty incurred by a false oath in case of a *land mark*, is singular: “ Let them,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “ putting earth on their heads, wearing chaplets of red flowers, and clad in red mantles, be sworn by *the reward of* all their several good actions, to give correct evidence concerning the metes and bounds.”§

There are cases, however, in which false testimony even in a court of justice, is not censured. “ In some cases,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “ a giver of false evidence, from a pious motive, even though he know the truth, shall not lose a seat in heaven: such evidence wise men call the speech of the gods. Whenever the death of a man, *who had*

* *Gentoo Laws*, p. 112. (P.)

† P. 200. (P.) Ch. viii. 87; *Jones*, VII. 344.

‡ *Instit.* p. 202. (P.) Ch. viii. 97—100; *Jones*, VII. pp. 346, 347.

§ *Instit.* p. 222. (P.) Ch. viii. 256; *Jones*, VII. p. 373.

not been a grievous offender—would be occasioned by true evidence,—falsehood may be spoken: it is even preferable to truth. Such *witnesses* must offer as oblations to SARASWATĪ, cakes of rice and milk, addressed to the goddess of speech; and thus will they expiate that venial sin of benevolent falsehood. Or such a *witness* may pour clarified butter into the holy fire, according to the sacred rule, hallowing it with the texts called *cūshmándá*, or with those which relate to VARUNA, beginning with *ud*; or with the three texts appropriated to the water-gods.* This speech of the gods farther says, “To women at a time of dalliance, or on a proposal of marriage, in the case of grass or fruit eaten by a cow, of wood taken for a sacrifice, or of a promise made for the preservation of a *Bráhmén*, it is no deadly sin to take a light oath.”† But what will the women say to this? It was fair, however, to apprize them of it, if indeed this be the case; for little care is taken of their instruction.

The *Hindoos* have many superstitious observances on the birth of a child. “Before the section of the navel string a ceremony is ordained on the birth of a male: he must be made, while sacred texts are pronounced, to taste a little honey and clarified butter from a golden spoon.—In the fourth month the child should be carried out of the house to see the sun: in the sixth month he should be fed with rice; or that may be done which, by the custom of the family, is thought most propitious.”‡

According to the *Hindoos*, the birth of a child has many very serious consequences with respect to the father, which I own I do not understand. “The husband, after conception by his wife,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “becomes himself an embryo, and is born a second time here below, for which reason the wife is called *jáyá*, since by her (*jáyaté*) he is born again.—By the eldest, at the moment of his birth, the father, having begotten a son, discharges his debt to his own progenitors; the eldest son, therefore, ought, before partition, to manage the whole patrimony. That son alone, by whose birth he discharges his debt, and through whom he attains immortality, was begotten from a sense of duty: all the rest are considered by the wise as begotten from love of pleasure.”§ Some, however, may think that this motive was as strong in the first instance as afterwards.

But the advantage of having a son is greater than has yet

* *Instit.* pp. 202—204. (P.) Ch. viii. 103—106, 112; *Jones*, VII. pp. 347—349.

† *Instit.* p. 21. (P.) Ch. ii. 29, 34; *Jones*, VII. p. 116.

‡ *Instit.* pp. 246, 248. (P.) Ch. ix. 8, 106, 107; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 2, 18, 19.

been intimated. "By a son a man obtains victory over all people. By a son's son he enjoys immortality; and afterwards by a son of that grandson, he reaches the solar abode. Since the son (*tráyaté*) delivers the father from the hell named *put*, he was therefore called *puttra* by BRAHMA' himself. Between the sons of his son and of his daughter *thus appointed*, there subsists in this world no difference; for even the son of *such* a daughter delivers him in the next, like the son of his son."*

The advantage of having children with respect to a future state is likewise declared in the following passage of the *Institutes of Menu*: "By studying the *Véda*, by religious observances, by oblations to fire, by the ceremony of *traividia*, by offering to the gods and manes, by the procreation of children, by the five great sacraments, and by solemn sacrifices, this human body is rendered fit for a divine state."†

"The *Parsis*" also "think marriage conducive to eternal happiness: for which reason, if a rich man's son or daughter happens to die before wedlock, he hires some person to marry the deceased."‡

The following is a singular kind of Hindoo superstition mentioned by Mr. Holwell; on "the superstitious veneration paid by the *Gentoos* to the numericals *one* and *three*.—A *Gentoo* never gives or receives an obligation for an even sum; if he borrow or lend a hundred, a thousand, or ten thousand rupees, the obligation runs for a hundred and *one*, a thousand and *one*, ten thousand and *one*."§

In this section of miscellaneous superstitions, I would observe that, like the ancient *Egyptians*, the *Chinese* and the *Hindoos* have an "abhorrence of *red* objects." This "the *Indians* carried so far, that MENU himself, where he allows a *Bráhman* to trade, if he cannot otherwise support life, absolutely forbids his trafficking in any sort of *red* cloths, whether linen or woollen, or made of woven bark."|| *P. Della Valle*, with some probability, ascribes this aversion to red-colours, to their abhorrence of blood.¶

* *Instit.* p. 263. (P.) Ch. ix. 137—139; *Jones*, VIII. p. 24.

† *Instit.* p. 20. (P.) Ch. ii. 28; *Jones*, VII. p. 115.

‡ *Mod. Univ. Hist.* VI. pp. 285, 286. (P.)

§ *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 121. (P.)

|| *Dissert. on Asia*, I. p. 229. (P.)

¶ *Travels*, p. 45. (P.) "The greatest sin in the world they account shedding of blood, especially that of men.—Hence the strictest among them—not only kill not, but eat not any living thing; and even from herbs tinged with any reddish colour representing blood, they wholly abstain." *Ibid.*

The Egyptians, *Plutarch* says, “are of opinion that *Typhon* was born of a *red* complexion. They, therefore, affront him by abusing such men as they find to have red hair.—They are used to devote to him such of the neat kind as they find to be of a red colour, and if they perceive the beast to have but one hair upon it, that is either black or white, they account it unfit for sacrifice. For they hold that what is fit to be made a sacrifice, must not be of a thing agreeable to the gods, but such things as contain the souls of ungodly and wicked men, transformed into their shapes.—They do not greatly care to meet with men of a red and sallow colour, nor willingly converse with them.—They fable that *Osiris*, when he was born, was of a *black* complexion.” Hence “the ox called *Mnevis*, which is kept at *Heliopolis*, and is sacred to *Osiris*, is of a coal-black colour.”*

I shall close this section with an account of some curious superstitions of ancient Heathen nations, especially such as relate to religion, collected from the writings of *Plutarch*; and they are but a small specimen of what might be collected from the best authorities: let *unbelievers* look for any thing of this nature in the writings of *Moses*. Whatever the *Hebrews* had of this kind, it was borrowed from their wise neighbours.

When the Egyptians offer “sacrifices to the sun, they neither wear gold, nor give fodder to an ass.”† “At Rhodes the crier never entered into the temple, or tomb of *Ocridion*.—At *Tenedos* a piper might not go into the temple of *Tenes*,” and “no mention might be made of *Achilles*, in that temple.”‡ The *Tuscans*, and also *Pythagoras*, observed, “as soon as risen,” to “ruffle the bed clothes; they were not to “leave the print of a pot in the ashes,” nor “receive a swallow into the house, never stepped over a besom, or kept in their houses animals that had hooked claws.”§

At a horse race on the ides of December at *Rome*, the horse that won was sacrificed to *Mars*. The tail was brought to a place called *Regina*, and the altar besmeared with the blood of it; but two companies, one going down the *Via Sacra*, and the other down *Saburra*, fought for the head. *Plutarch* says, “The Latins worship a woodpecker,

* *De Iside et Osiride*. (P.) *Morals*, IV. pp. 101, 104, 105.

† *De Iside et Osiride*. (P.) *Morals*, IV. p. 101. “Because *Typhon* was red and of the ass’s complexion.” *Ibid*. p. 100.

‡ *Greek Questions*. (P.) Q. 27, 28; *Morals*, Pt. v. II. pp. 99, 100.

§ *Symposiacs*. (P.) B. viii. Q. vii.; *Morals*, III. p. 361.

and abstain strictly from that bird.—The days after the *Calends, Nones and Ides*,” of any month, they deem “ unfit to travel in.—They prohibit their children to swear by *Hercules*, within doors, but command them to go out of the doors to do it.—They do not permit the new-married woman to step over the threshold of the house, but the bride-men lift her over.—They do not suffer the table to be quite cleared, when it is taken away, but will have something always to remain upon it.” The Roman “ priests that had sores about them, were forbidden to use divination.”—The *Flamen Dialis* was not allowed “ to touch meal, or leaven, raw flesh, or ivy.” A *Roman* priest was not allowed “ to touch or name a dog or a goat.”*

To these from Plutarch I shall only add the following : “ In May the Romans celebrated the festival of the *Lemures*, or ghosts of the *dead*, during which time the temples were shut up, and marriages intermitted as fatal.”†

SECTION XXII.

Of the Devotion of the modern Jews.

THE *Jews*, in their intercourse with various nations, have got much of the false philosophy and superstition which has prevailed in all ages, and in every part of the world ; which shews that, if left to themselves, they would have had as much of it as any other people. But not only are their sacred books free from every thing of the kind, but their modern liturgies, and all their forms of prayer. They consist chiefly of the psalms, and of compositions on the same model, which breathe a spirit of pure and rational devotion, expressing the greatest veneration for the Divine attributes and government, gratitude for the mercies of God, supplication for his favour, and submission to his will, with respect to all the events of life.

In the daily habits and practices of the *Jews* there is, no doubt, much of real superstition ; but it is not of the same kind with that of the *Heathens*, as it has no immoral tendency. They are trifling observances, such as our Saviour animadverted upon, too apt to supply the place of solid virtue, but not necessarily having this effect. In excuse for

* *Roman Questions*. (P.) Q. 21, 25, 28, 29, 64, 73, 109—112; *Morals*, Pt. v. ll. pp. 16, 18, 22, 23, 47, 52, 77, 79.

† *Ann. Reg.* (1761) IV. p. 169. (P.) See *Or. Pastor*, L. v. *ibid.*; Plutarch's *Roman Questions* (Q. 86); *Morals*, Pt. v. ll. p. 62.

them they say, that the external actions serve to remind them of something relating to what is internal, as bathing to moral purity, &c. And if they pay any attention to the meaning of the words in their many forms, they must serve to keep up an attention to the Divine Being and his providence, and thereby greatly promote habitual devotion. They must lead them to *acknowledge God in all their ways*, reminding them of their constant dependence upon him, and obligation to him. From their rising in the morning to their going to sleep, *God must be in all their thoughts*; the first and the last thing that is in their mouths, and it may be hoped in their minds, being prayers, or rather benedictions, in acknowledgment of the goodness of God, and recommending themselves and their nation to his favour.

I shall just mention a few of their forms. As soon as they rise in the morning, they say, "Blessed be thou, O Lord, our God, king of the world, who givest life to the dead, who givest sight to the blind." When they wash before prayer, or in obedience to any particular precept, they say, "Blessed be thou, O Lord our God, king of the world, who sanctifiest us by thy precepts, and hast commanded us to wash," &c.*

If so many as ten *Jews* live in the same place, they do not content themselves with their private devotions, but resort to their synagogue, or public school, three times a-day; and it is a rule with them to speak of no business, to pay no visit, or even salute any person, till they have discharged this duty to God, in the morning of every day. If ten be present,† one of them reads the forms aloud, and the rest say *amen* to each.‡

At every action that they perform, whether they eat or drink, if they even smell any sweet odour, when they hear any precept of their law, or see any thing new and extraordinary, they pronounce an appropriated form of benediction.§ At every regular meal, the master of the house begins with

* See "Cérémonies et Coutumes qui s'observent aujourd'hui parmi les Juifs. Traduites de l'Italien de *Leon de Modene*, Rabin de Venise." *A Paris*, 1674, p. 28.

† Who are aged at least thirteen years and one day. "Qui ayent au moins treize ans et un jour." *Ibid.* p. 42.

‡ "Les Allemands chantent plus fortement, que les autres. Les Levantins, et les Espagnols d'une certaine façon, qui a quelque chose de la manière de chanter des Turcs. Les Italiens chantent posément, et à leur aise." *Ibid.* p. 43.

§ "Les Rabins ont engagé les Juifs à réciter des bénédictions et des louanges particulières à Dieu.—Dans toutes les occasions imprévues, et à chaque action qu'ils font, soit qu'ils mangent quelque chose, ou qu'ils boivent quelque liqueur, qu'ils sentent quelques bonnes odeurs, et enfin pour chaque précepte de la Loi et des Rabins." *Ibid.* pp. 26, 27.

repeating the 22nd *Psalm* : “ The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”* When he first takes the bread, he says, “ Blessed be thou, O Lord, king of the world, who bringest food out of the earth.”† When he takes the wine, he says, “ Blessed be thou, O Lord, king of the world, who hast created the fruit of the vine.”‡ When he takes fruit of any kind, he says, “ Blessed be thou, O Lord, who hast created the fruit of the tree.”§ In short, they think it ingratitude to enjoy, or make use of any thing without acknowledging, in some short form of thanksgiving, that they receive it from God, the Lord of all.|| At the close of every meal, they use a longer form of thanksgiving, praying, at the same time, that God would have mercy upon *Jerusalem*, restore the Temple, and set up the kingdom of David in their time.¶

The methods they take to inspire, and keep up a reverence for the Scriptures are very effectual. The *Pentateuch* is written in fair and large characters on a roll of parchment, fitted up in the most ornamental manner. It is put into a bag of silk curiously wrought, preserved in a place of the synagogue, set apart for the purpose, richly ornamented. When it is brought out, or carried back, it is done with great ceremony, and the children in the place are permitted to put their hands upon it, &c. This has the appearance of superstition, but the tendency and effect of it is to inspire an uncommon reverence for the book, and the law that it contains. They divide it into fifty-two parts, and read one of them every Sabbath, so as to go through the whole every year.** At the same time they read certain portions of the writings of the prophets, and other canonical books. As soon as a child can speak, he is taught to read the Scriptures in the language of the country in which they live, and they are taught the exposition of it, and the doctrine of their Rabbins, as soon as they are capable of it. They are also taught the *Hebrew* language, if they learn any thing more than the first rudiments of education.

* “ En suite le maître de la maison prend un pain entier, et après l'avoir benî, il le rompt, et en donne à chacun de ceux qui sont à table gros comme une olive, après quoi les conviés mangent tant qu'ils veulent.” *Cérémonies*, pp. 104, 105.

† *Ibid.* p. 28.

‡ *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.*

|| “ Enfin en toutes choses, avant, ou après toute action ; et en quelques-unes, au commencement et à la fin, ils récitent quelque bénédiction à Dieu, croyant que c'est un péché d'ingratitude de jouir, ou de se servir de quoique ce soit au monde, sans premièrement reconnoître par quelques paroles de louange, qu'on le tient de Dieu, qui est le maître de tout.—Ils sont obligés de dire au moins cent bénédictions par jour.” *Ibid.* pp. 29, 30.

¶ *Ibid.* p. 106,

** *Ibid.* p. 48.

Their observances with respect to the Sabbath, and other festivals, are, in many respects, trifling ; but they are innocent, and the tendency of them all is to raise the thoughts to God, to remind them of his law and his moral government, and especially to keep up their faith in his promises, that he would restore them to his favour, and speedily send the *Messiah* for their deliverance. All their devotions have no other object than the one true God, the creator and preserver of all things. They worship no angels, demons, or dead men. They consider it as a heinous sin to believe in, or to practise any kind of divination, as *astrology*, *geomancy*, *chiromancy*, but more especially *necromancy*, magic, or charms of any kind.

The *Jews* distinguish themselves by their charity to the poor, even those of other nations, and also by their tenderness for animals. They never torture or abuse any of them ; and when they kill any of them for food, they do it so as to put them to the least pain, considering them as the creatures of God, *whose tender mercies are over all his works*.

This account is taken from Buxtorf's *Synagoga Judaica*,* and *Leo de Modena, on the Ceremonies of the Jews*.† The object of *Buxtorf* evidently was to expose the Jews to the contempt of Christians, and he omits no opportunity of making reflections which have that tendency, discovering an illiberality and malignity unworthy of a Christian ; but notwithstanding this, the perusal of his book has, in my opinion, a tendency to inspire all candid persons with a respect for the Jews, and shews the great superiority of their religion and customs to those of any Heathen nation. Besides, the things that he turns into ridicule are their traditions, which are not regarded by the *Karaites*,‡ who, though not the most numerous, are, however, a pretty considerable body of Jews.

SECTION XXIII.

Of the Hindoo Doctrine of a Future State.

THE most important article in any religion is, no doubt, its doctrine concerning a *future state*, as a motive to the proper discharge of the duties of life, and a support under the

* See *Ceremonies*, Pref. ii. iii.

† See Wotton "on the daily recital of the Shema," *Misc. Disc.* I. pp. 178—185.

‡ See the *Supplement* in *Ceremonies*, pp. 224—245.

troubles of it. In this respect, as well as with regard to the doctrine of one Supreme God, from whom all the inferior deities and the whole universe were derived, the system of the *Hindoos* has the advantage over that of any other ancient Heathen nation. They almost all lost sight of the former great principle, and retained nothing of the latter that could have much influence on their conduct. Whereas we see, in fact, that the *Hindoo* doctrine of a future state, whimsical and arbitrary as it is, has, nevertheless, an unquestionable influence on their conduct ; leading them to overlook all that they can suffer in this life, with a view to the bettering of their condition in a future one.

But it does not appear that either this or any other part of the system was ever promulgated with the appearance of proper *authority* ; since no miracles, as far as we can find, were ever appealed to as proofs that the person who taught it received it from God, and was by him commissioned to impart it to men. And nothing can be more destitute of natural probability than it is. It goes entirely on the arbitrary supposition, not only that men have souls distinct from their bodies, capable of action and enjoyment independently of them, but that they all existed in a prior state, and are destined, after a course of purgation here, to rise to their pristine condition, and finally to be re-united to the Supreme Mind, from which they and all other beings sprung.

I need not at this day, and in this part of the world, enter into argument to shew the futility of this system, how destitute it is of all probability, not being countenanced by any appearance in nature. The whole must have been the product, not only of mere imagination, but of a very sportive one, as will be sufficiently evident when I come to bring into view the particulars of which it consists, as, in order to give a just view of the system, it will be necessary for me to do.

That particular defects of body, with which some persons are born, are considered as punishments for offences in a prior state, is evident from the following passage in the *Institutes of Menu* : “ Some evil-minded persons, for sins committed in this life, and some for bad actions in a preceding state, suffer a morbid change in their bodies. A stealer of gold from a *Bráhmén* has whitlows on his nails ; a drinker of spirits, black teeth ; the slayer of a *Bráhmén*, a marasmus ; the violator of his *guru's* bed, a deformity in the generative organs ; a malignant informer, fetid ulcers in his nostrils ; a false detractor, stinking breath ; a stealer of grain, the de-

fect of some limb; a mixer of *bad wares with good*, some redundant member; a stealer of dressed grain, dyspepsia; a stealer of holy words, or an *unauthorized reader of the Scriptures*, dumbness; a stealer of clothes, leprosy; a horse-stealer, lameness; the stealer of a lamp, total blindness; the mischievous extinguisher of it, blindness in one eye; a delighter in hurting sentient creatures, perpetual illness; an adulterer, windy swellings in his limbs. Thus, according to the diversity of actions, are born men despised by the good, stupid, dumb, blind, deaf, and deformed.* “To a man *punished for past crimes, by being born without a prepuce*,—let him never give food at the sacred obsequies.”†

As the *Hindoos* suppose all matter to be animated, even plants, as well as animals, they suppose them to be capable of recovering their former happy state. “Gramineous plants, cattle, timber trees, amphibious animals, and birds which have been destroyed for the purpose of sacrifice, attain in the next world exalted births.”‡

This great advantage, however, it is evident they gain not by any thing done by them in this state of degradation, but by what was done with them by others, in the use that men make of them. But, in like manner, the *Hindoos* suppose that a man’s ancestors may suffer in another world by what their posterity do in this. “Should the eater of a *sráddha* enter, on the same day, the bed of a seducing woman, his ancestors would sleep for that month on her excrement.”§ “If the *Bráhmén* husbandman apply seeds of *tila* to any purpose but food, anointing, and sacred oblations, he shall be plunged, in the shape of a worm, together with his parents, into the ordure of dogs.”||

In order to give a just idea of the *Hindoo* doctrine of a future state, it is necessary to consider what particular virtues are entitled to reward in it, and what those rewards are; as also what vices are punished in it, and in what manner.

That men who die in battle will attain to a happy state hereafter, was an important article in the religion of the *Northern* nations of *Europe*,¶ and it is so with the *Mahometans*.** The same is the faith of the *Hindoos*, at least with respect to their princes. “Those rulers of the earth

* *Instit.* p. 313. (P.) Ch. xi. 48—53; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 89, 90.

† *Instit.* p. 71. (P.) Ch. iii. 151; *Jones*, VII. pp. 178, 179.

‡ *Instit.* p. 128. (P.) Ch. v. 40; *Jones*, VII. p. 251.

§ *Instit.* p. 84. (P.) Ch. iii. 250; *Jones*, VII. p. 195.

|| *Instit.* p. 300. (P.) Ch. x. 91; *Jones*, VIII. p. 72.

¶ See *Edda*, quoted Vol. II. p. 101, *Note* †.

** See Vol. XVI. p. 328.

who, desirous of defeating each other, exert their utmost strength in battle, without ever averting their faces, ascend after death directly to heaven.”* This will not be found in the writings of *Moses*, or in any part of the Scriptures.

The great bulk of mankind cannot expect to attain to any thing more than a favourable transmigration into the bodies of some of the more noble animals, or such as generally meet with the best treatment in this world ; but after being born a Bramin, it is supposed that they are the nearest to the heavenly mansions. “A priest,” say the *Institutes of Menu*, “who lives always by these rules, who knows the ordinances of the *Véda*, who is freed from the bondage of sin, shall be absorbed in the Divine essence.”† “That *Bráhmen* who has dutifully attended his preceptor till the dissolution of his body, passes directly to the eternal mansion of God. The twice-born man who shall thus, without intermission, have passed the time of his studentship, shall ascend after death to the most exalted of regions, and no more again spring to birth in this lower world.”‡

The *Hindoo* transmigration is not only into the bodies of animals, but in some cases men may become vegetables, and even mineral substances. “For sinful acts mostly corporeal, a man shall assume *after death* a vegetable or mineral form ; for such acts mostly verbal, the form of a bird or a beast ; for acts mostly mental, the lowest of human conditions.§ But the most complete system of transformations is contained in the following passage of the *Institutes of Menu*, which, on account of its extreme curiosity, I shall not abridge.

“What particular bodies the vital spirit enters in this world, and in consequence of what sins here committed, now hear at large, and in order. Sinners in the first degree, having passed through terrible regions of torture, for a great number of years, are condemned to the following births at the close of that period, to efface all remains of their sin. The slayer of a *Bráhmen* must enter, *according to the circumstances of his crime*, the body of a dog, a boar, an ass, a camel, a bull, a goat, a sheep, a stag, a bird, a *Chandála*, or a *Puccasa*. A priest who has drank spirituous liquor, shall migrate into the form of a smaller or larger worm or insect, of a moth, of a fly feeding on ordure, or of some ravenous animal. He who steals the gold of a priest, shall

* *Instit.* p. 170. (P.) Ch. vii. 89 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 306.

† *Instit.* p. 122. (P.) Ch. iv. 260 ; *Jones*, VII. p. 244.

‡ *Instit.* p. 49. (P.) Ch. ii. 244, 249 ; *Jones*, VII. pp. 151, 152.

§ *Instit.* p. 346. (P.) Ch. xii. 9 ; *Jones*, VIII. p. 130.

pass a thousand times into the bodies of spiders, of snakes and camelions, of *crocodiles and other* aquatic monsters, or of mischievous bloodsucking demons. He who violates the bed of his *natural or spiritual* father, migrates a hundred times into the forms of grasses, of shrubs with crowded stems, or of creeping and twining plants, of *vultures and other* carnivorous animals, of *lions and other* beasts with sharp teeth, or of *tigers and other* cruel brutes. They who hurt any sentient beings are born *cats and other* eaters of raw flesh; they who taste what ought not to be tasted, maggots, or small flies; they who steal *ordinary things*, devourers of each other; they who embrace very low women become restless ghosts. He who has held intercourse with degraded men, or been criminally connected with the wife of another, or stolen *common things* from a priest, shall be changed into a spirit called Brachmarácshasa. The wretch, who through covetousness has stolen *rubies or other* gems, pearls, or coral, or precious things, of which there are many sorts, shall be born *in the tribe of goldsmiths*, or among *birds called* hémacáras, or *goldmakers*. If a man steal grain in the husk, he shall be born a rat; if a yellow mixed metal, a gander; if water, a *plava*, or diver; if honey, a great stinging gnat; if milk, a crow; if expressed juice, a dog; if clarified butter, an ichneumon weazel. If he steal flesh meat, a vulture: if any sort of fat, the water-bird *madgu*; if oil, a *blatta*, or oil-drinking beetle; if salt, a cicada, or cricket; if curds, the bird *valáca*; if silken clothes, the bird *tittir*; if woven flax, a frog; if cotton cloth, the water bird *crauncha*; if a cow, the lizard *gódhá*; if molasses, the bird *vagguda*; if exquisite perfumes, a musk rat; if potherbs, a peacock; if dressed grain, in any of its various forms, a porcupine; if raw grain, a hedgehog: If he steal fire, the bird *vaca*; if a household utensil, an ichneumon-fly; if dyed cloth, the bird *chacóra*; if a deer, or an elephant, he shall be born a wolf; if a horse, a tiger; if roots, or fruit, an ape; if a woman, a bear; if water from a jar, the bird *chátaca*; if carriages, a camel; if small cattle, a goat.—Women who have committed similar thefts, incur a similar taint, and shall be paired with those male beasts in the form of their females.”*

As several of these punishments relate to the killing of animals, it is desirable to know how far their guilt extends; and in the same work we have the following information on the subject: “He who consents to the death of an ani-

* *Instit.* p. 353. (P.) Ch. xii. 53—67, 69; *Jones*, VIII. pp. 138—140.

mal; he who kills it; he who dissects it; he who buys it; he who sells it; he who dresses it; he who serves it up; and he who makes it his food; these are eight principals in the slaughter.”*

Besides the punishment of transmigration, there are in the *Hindoo* system, as has appeared in some cases already, a variety of *hells* for the punishment of crimes; and in them the modes of suffering are various. The following is a specimen of what we are taught on this subject in the *Institutes of Menu*:

“He who receives a present from an avaricious king, and a transgressor of the sacred ordinances, goes successively to the following twenty-one hells, *Támisra*,” &c. &c. All these are distinctly named, and the last, *Loh’angáraca*, is called *the pit of red-hot charcoal*.”† “He who makes a marriage contract with the connubial fire, while his elder brother continues unmarried,—the damsel thus wedded, the giver of her in wedlock, and the performer of the nuptial sacrifice, all sink to a region of torment.”‡ As many mouthfuls as an unlearned man shall swallow at an oblation to the gods and to ancestors, so many red-hot iron balls must the giver of the *sráddha* swallow in the next world.”§ “That fool, who, having eaten the *sráddha*, gives the residue of it to a man of the servile class, falls headlong down to the hell called *cálasútra*.”||

The greatest of all crimes we have seen to be the injuring, and especially the killing, of a Bramin; and we have the following curious circumstances respecting that sin in the future world, according to the degrees of the guilt: “Any evil-hearted wretch, who, through covetousness, shall seize the property of the Gods, or of *Bráhmens*, shall feed in another world on the orts of vultures.”¶ “A twice-born man who barely assaults a *Bráhmen* with intention to hurt him, shall be whirled about for a century in the hell named *Támisra*; but, having smitten him in anger, and by design, even with a blade of grass, he shall be born, in one-and-twenty transmigrations, from the wombs of impure quadrupeds. He who, through ignorance of the law, sheds blood from the body of a *Bráhmen*, not engaged in battle, shall feel excessive pain in his future life. As many particles of

* *Instit.* p. 129. (P.) Ch. v. 51; *Jones*, VII. p. 253.

† *Instit.* p. 99. (P.) Ch. iv. 87—90; *Jones*, VII. p. 216.

‡ *Instit.* p. 74. (P.) Ch. iii. 171, 172; *Jones*, VII. p. 182.

§ *Instit.* Ch. iii. 133; *Jones*, VII. p. 175.

|| *Instit.* p. 84. (P.) Ch. iii. 249; *Jones*, VII. pp. 194, 195.

¶ *Instit.* p. 310. (P.) Ch. xi. 26; *Jones*, VIII. p. 85.

dust as the blood shall roll up from the ground, for so many years shall the shedder of that blood be mangled by other animals in his next birth.”* “An assaulter of a *Bráhmén*, with intent to kill, shall remain in hell a hundred years; for actually striking him, *with the like intent*, a thousand. As many small pellets of dust as the blood of a *Bráhmén* collects on the ground, for so many thousand years must the shedder of that blood be tormented in hell.”† The *Gentoo Laws* say, “Whoever resumes the established *Burrut* (religious foundation) of a *Bráhmén*, and the *Dewtah*, or of any other person, will remain in hell one thousand years.”‡

The *Bramins* themselves are not considered as impeccable, and I shall now recite from the *Institutes of Menu*, the punishments to which they are subject: “By censuring his preceptor, though justly, he (the scholar) will be born an ass; by falsely defaming him, a dog; by using his goods without leave, a small worm; by envying his merit, a larger insect or reptile.”§ “Let no twice-born man, who knows the law, and is not in urgent distress, eat flesh without observing this rule; for he, unable to save himself, will be devoured in the next world by those very animals whose flesh he has thus illegally swallowed.”|| “The *Bráhmén* who begs any articles for a sacrifice, and disposes not of them all for that purpose, shall become a kite, or a crow, for a hundred years.”¶ “A *Bráhmén*, if he take a *Súdra* to his bed, as his first wife, sinks to the regions of torment; if he beget a child by her, he loses even his priestly rank. His sacrifice to the gods, his oblations to the manes, and his hospitable attentions to strangers, must be supplied principally by her; but the gods and manes will not eat such offerings, nor can heaven be attained by such hospitality.”**

Mr. Dow gives an account of the *Hindoo* doctrine of a future state very different from the preceding. According to his representation of it, men first “atone for their crimes in hell, where they must remain for a space proportioned to the degree of their iniquities. Then they rise to heaven, to be rewarded for a time for their virtues; and from thence they will return to the world to re-animate other bodies.”†† He farther says that, according to the doctrine of the

* *Instit.* p. 110. (P.) Ch. iv. 165—168; *Jones*, VII. pp. 228, 229.

† *Instit.* p. 336. (P.) Ch. xi. 207, 208; *Jones*, VIII. p. 118.

‡ *Pref.* pp. cxix. cxx. (P.)

§ *Instit.* p. 43. (P.) Ch. ii. 201; *Jones*, VII. p. 144.

|| *Instit.* p. 127. (P.) Ch. v. 33; *Jones*, VII. p. 250.

¶ *Instit.* p. 310. (P.) Ch. xi. 25; *Jones*, VIII. p. 85.

** *Instit.* p. 53. (P.) Ch. iii. 17, 18; *Jones*, VII. p. 156.

†† *Hindustan*, (*Dissert.*) I. p. xlv. (P.)

BEDANG, "God has no passions, but benevolence; and being possessed of no wrath, he never punishes the wicked, but by the pain and the affliction which are the natural consequences of evil actions. The more learned *Brahmins*," he says, "affirm that the *hell* which is mentioned in the BEDANG was only intended as a mere bug-bear to the vulgar."* This was the doctrine of the Greek philosophers. They said that God being without anger, the wicked would not be punished after death. It is not, however, anger, but virtually benevolence, or a regard to the good of the whole creation, that requires the punishment of the wicked either here or hereafter.

Mr. Holwell also, contrary to all other accounts, which represent future punishment as in all cases finite, says, as from the *Shastah*, that "whosoever shall dare to *free himself* by violence from the mortal form, shall be plunged into the *Onderah* for ever."†

According to Mr. Phillips's Account of the Religion of *Malabar*, "all those that hang, poison, or any other way lay violent hands on themselves, or die suddenly, their souls go neither to heaven nor to hell, but stroll about," and become what are called "spirits, under the power of the chief devils." It is also said that "if any servant of *Tschiven* commits a heinous crime," he "curses him, and they become devils, and appear under different shapes to deceive the simple and ignorant people, by stirring in their minds many unclean and extravagant thoughts." Sometimes they "enter into them, and then they become *Demoniacs*, or possessed, and run about naked and mad, to disturb the neighbourhood, eating grass and raw flesh."‡ *P. Della Valle* also says, that according to the Indians some very wicked men become devils.§

Such is the faith of the Hindoos with respect to themselves. As to a person of another nation and religion, according to *P. Della Valle*, "if his soul shall be worthy to have pardon from God, it shall after death, and after being purged sundry ways, pass into and be born in the body of some Indian amongst them, and live excellently, and so by this way, at last, arrive at paradise, and live with God; although in the beginning it was in the world in the body of the worst sinner and miscreant whatever."||

* *Hindostan (Dissert.)*, I. p. 1. (P.)

† *Interesting Historical Events*, Pt. ii. p. 52. (P.)

‡ Phillips's *Account*, pp. 84, 85. (P.)

§ *Travels*, p. 45. The Egyptians believed that all eminent persons become stars when they die. *Plutarch de Iside et Osiride*. (P.)

|| *Travels*, p. 12. (P.)

The ancient Persians appear to have retained the belief of a resurrection, which I doubt not was a doctrine originally communicated to mankind, though the record of it is now lost. The writings of the *Parsis* contained several particulars relating to the end of the world, and the resurrection. *Zoroaster*, in the *Zendavesta*, expatiates on what is to happen at that time. "After this great event," he says, "the righteous and the wicked shall pass over a bridge that separates earth from heaven, under the protection of the dog, who was created as the common guardian of cattle."* "The heat shall then cause the mountains to flow like a river: all men shall pass through that burning lake, and be purified: the righteous shall feel but a gentle warmth; the wicked shall suffer by the heat, but shall at length be purified and happy."†

They do not bury or burn their dead, but expose them on places erected for the purpose, to be devoured by birds of prey; and observe which of the eyes is first picked out. If it be the right eye, they believe the deceased to be happy, and express great joy on the occasion; but if it be the left, they consider it as a bad omen with respect to the deceased, and are very sorrowful.

The *Parsis* have a superstitious respect for dogs, but a great aversion to serpents, lizards, toads, frogs, ants, crabs, mice, rats, and especially to cats; being of opinion that they were created not by God, but by the devil, and that they are his executioners in the torment of the damned. They therefore endeavour to destroy as many of them as they can, thinking thereby to diminish the sufferings of those that are in hell. They believe, however, that at the end of the world they will all be released from torment, and go to paradise.‡

My readers are now, I hope, satisfied, if not satiated, with respect to the *Hindoo* doctrine of a future state. For, sure, it must appear to be as destitute of dignity, as it is of authority; even more so than the paradise and hell of

* *Ann. Reg.* (1762.) V. p. 116. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 128. (P.)

‡ *Tavernier*, I. pp. 493, 494. (P.) "Les deux animaux qu'ils aiment le plus sont le bœuf ou la vache, et le chien.—Les animaux qu'ils ont fort en horreur, sont les serpens, les couleuvres, les lézards, les crapaux, les grenouilles, les écrevisses, les fourmis, les rats, les souris, et surtout les chats.

"Ce qui leur donne tant d'aversion pour ces animaux, est la croyance qu'ils ont aussi qu'ils n'ont pas été créés de Dieu, mais du diable; et que ce sont les bourreaux dont ils se servent pour tourmenter les damnés. Ils tâchent donc de les exterminer tant qu'ils peuvent, croyant faire un œuvre de charité, en diminuant par ce moyen les peines des damnés, qui à la fin du monde iront, disent-ils, en Paradis avec tous les autres." *Ibid.*

Mahomet,* who borrowed his bridge from the religion of the *Persians*. How different, in all respects, is the doctrine of our Scriptures on this important subject; in which, though it is said by some *unbelievers* to have been derived from other oriental systems, we find nothing concerning the pre-existence of human souls, or of their transmigrations after death, but only that, at a time appointed by God, the dead shall be raised, when all men will be rewarded or punished according to their works! But with respect to the particulars of which our future happiness or misery will consist, we are wisely left in ignorance.

At what time this great doctrine was first revealed to man, we have no certain knowledge. We find it among the *Jews* before the time of our Saviour, though no mention is made of it in the writings of *Moses*; and there are not many allusions to it in any of the books of the *Old Testament*.† But Jesus was commissioned, and empowered, to publish it in the clearest and most satisfactory manner. For, after performing numerous miracles, in the presence of all his countrymen, his enemies never excluded, some of them being the raising the dead to life, he voluntarily surrendered himself to his enemies, and after a public crucifixion, (which could leave no reasonable doubt with respect to the reality of his death,) he came to life again at the time that he had previously fixed, to the entire satisfaction of many hundreds of those who could not be mistaken with respect to his person, and who on his death had not the least expectation of the event. In my *Discourse on the Resurrection of Jesus*,‡ I have shewn that this most important fact was so circumstanced that the evidence of its truth could not have been stronger than it now is at this distance of time, on any supposed change of circumstances, according to the fairest rules for estimating the value of testimony. Whereas the *Hindoo* doctrine is both in the highest degree incredible in itself, and destitute of all external evidence whatever.

SECTION XXIV.

Concluding Reflections.

I conclude this Comparison of the *Institutions of Moses* with those of the *Hindoos* and other ancient Nations, with

* See Vol. XVI. pp. 347—355.

† See Vol. XII. pp. 482—504.

‡ Vol. XV. pp. 325—348.

some observations of a general nature relating to the evidence of revelation, which appear to me to be naturally suggested by the view that I have exhibited of the state of knowledge and religion in the early ages.

1. If we inquire into the foundation of the *Hindoo* religion, we find it to be a perfectly baseless fabric. The only proper evidence of any truth beyond the natural powers of the human mind, that is, such as men who had only the appearances of nature to reason from could not have discovered, (and this is evidently the case with respect to many parts of this system,) must be information received from beings who know more than man can attain to. And the only evidence of such supernatural information are such works as only beings superior to man can perform, that is, proper *miracles*; and it does not yet appear that any thing of this kind is so much as pretended to by the advocates for this system. It is only asserted, on the mere authority of the Bramins, the authors of the Hindoo sacred books, that their religion and laws were dictated by Brahma, the agent of the Supreme Being. But where is the evidence of this? What is there in the system itself, or the books which contain it, that exceeds the faculties of man; and what proof is alleged of the interference of *Brahma*, or any other being superior to man?

That the souls of men have pre-existed, and were sent down into mortal bodies for offences committed in a prior state, is what a man may easily *imagine*, but it is not what any man can *know*. If, therefore, it be true, he must have learned it from some person who knew more of the matter than himself; and he that promulgated the doctrine should have given some evidence of his having had communication with such a being. Here the defect lies.

The sacred books of the *Hindoos* are, no doubt, very ancient: but that circumstance is no proof of a divine origin, to which they pretend. They are probably as old as those of *Moses*. But what the author of the Hindoo system did not, as far as appears, pretend to, *Moses* did. The promulgation of his laws, was, according to his writings, accompanied with numerous miracles, of the most stupendous kind, miracles of which millions of persons must have been witnesses; and they were on so large a scale, and of such a nature, that there could not have been any imposition in the case. The history of them was also committed to writing, and published while the events were recent; so that no person in the whole nation appears to have entertained any doubt with respect to them, from that time to the

present day. And yet this nation was far from having any predilection for the institutions that were thus prescribed to them. This appears abundantly from their frequent rejection of them, and the preference they gave to those of their neighbours.

There are, it is acknowledged, several articles in the institutions of *Moses* for which we are not able to assign satisfactory reasons. But this cannot be thought extraordinary, considering that their antiquity is so great, and that they were adapted to a state of manners, opinions, and other circumstances of those remote times, with which we are but imperfectly acquainted. Neither are we able fully to satisfy ourselves with respect to many particulars in the system of *nature*, which, notwithstanding, we have no doubt, came from God. And the more attention we give to both, the more reason do we discover for those circumstances which at first appeared the most objectionable. The better we understand them both, the more reason do we see to admire them, and to be satisfied that they were ordained by a wisdom more than human. And the comparison that I have exhibited of the institutions of *Moses* with those of the *Hindoos*, which all my readers will allow to be merely human, will I hope set this argument in a peculiarly strong point of light.

The absurdity of the *Hindoo* system is as apparent as the superior wisdom of that of *Moses*; and yet in every other respect the Hindoo nation appears to much greater advantage. With them we find the rudiments, and more than the rudiments, of most of the arts and sciences, especially that of astronomy, of which most other nations were wholly ignorant. And yet, while the *Hebrews* made no discoveries in science, they had a religion perfectly rational, and that of the *Hindoos* was absurd in the extreme. This, surely, is an argument of the internal kind, in favour of the divine origin of the Hebrew religion, almost as irresistible as any argument from miracles.

2. It is universally acknowledged that, in the early ages of mankind, there was a period that was free from the *polytheism* and idolatry which afterwards prevailed. The sentiments and practices of men were such as we now think more rational, and less chargeable with superstition and folly. This, Mr. Holwell says, was the case with the *Hindoos*. It was so with the *northern* nations of *Europe*; and according to *Clavigero*, the horrid rites of the *Mexican* religion had not been adopted many centuries before the

arrival of the *Spaniards*. At the same time, it must be allowed, that men could not of themselves have had more knowledge in those early ages than they acquired afterwards. Their faculties being the same, and their observation and experience (the only natural sources of knowledge) being more confined, they must of necessity have known less than their posterity, who had greatly the advantage of them in that respect.

From this remarkable fact, is it not evident, that in the period which preceded the polytheism and idolatry that overspread the world, mankind had had instruction from some supernatural source, and that they afterwards lost sight of it; that when they were left to themselves, and their own speculations, they corrupted the purer tenets which they had received from their ancestors, and adopted others from such deductions as they were able of themselves to make from their observation of the course of nature? Then, contemplating such objects as the sun, the moon, the stars, and the earth, and conceiving them to be the immediate causes of the good or evil to which they were exposed, they confined their regards to them; and not being able to perceive the natural connexion of causes and effects, they imagined that their influences, which we know to be *necessary*, were *voluntary*; that the sun emitted his heat, for beneficial or hurtful purposes, at his pleasure, or that of some intelligent being who resided, as they thought, in his sphere and directed his motions; and that the moon, the stars, the planets, and even terrestrial objects, were also animated like themselves. Hence they were naturally led to the idea of endeavouring to gain the favour, and to avert the displeasure, of those divinities, to whose power they were subject, by such methods as were adapted to produce the same effect on themselves.

3. Having once got into this train of thinking, that polytheism into which all mankind went, and all the superstitious rites of the Heathen religions, were the natural consequence; and nothing but a farther insight into the true causes of natural appearances than they could possibly have gained, could have corrected the false judgments they had formed of things, and have brought them back to the simple and rational religion of their ancestors; consisting in the acknowledgment of one great Being, the cause of all things, and of all events; and that what they took to be primary, were only secondary causes, under the direction of the supreme cause of all. As such an insight into the

works of nature was not attained by the *Greeks* or *Romans*, the most enlightened of the nations of antiquity, it is not at all probable that mankind in general would ever, of themselves, have gained so much knowledge as would have been sufficient for that purpose ; or, at least, not till a period too remote for our contemplation.

The more men speculate on false principles, the farther they necessarily wander from truth and reason, and the more they involve themselves in intricate and absurd opinions ; and, if the subject be *religion*, in superstitious and absurd practices, fancying innumerable things to be causes, or indications of events, which in reality have no relation to them. Hence came the whole business of divination, auguries, oracles, &c. &c. ; and hence, also, both human sacrifices, and rites of the most licentious nature. For what is there not that men, judging as they did of their gods by what they experienced and observed of men, might not imagine was adapted to please some or other of them ? They even thought, as we have seen, that when they could not prevail upon them by fair means, they might succeed by having recourse to violence. Hence the beating of the sacred animals in *Egypt*, of the statues of some of the gods of *Greece*, and also the same treatment of those of some of the Popish saints ; for the same causes will ever produce the same effects.

If a few persons, more enlightened than others, could have acquired *knowledge* enough to see the folly of the vulgar superstition, it is not probable that they would ever have had *influence* (if they had had the *public spirit* and *courage*) sufficient to correct the errors of the multitude, and break their inveterate habits. It is most probable that their first conviction of the absurdity of the prevailing superstition would have led them to the rejection of all religion, and to become Atheists rather than revert to the worship of the one Supreme Being. And never could they, from their observation of any appearances in nature, have been led to the belief of a future state.

Without revelation the degree of reason that God has thought proper to give to a man is so far from being sufficient for his moral instruction, that the most intelligent of the Heathens, those who thought and reflected the most, (as we may judge by their refinements in metaphysics, mythology, and theology,) as the *Egyptians*, the *Greeks*, and the *Hindoos*, have erred the most widely ; having given into more absurd superstitions than the most stupid of mankind :

for certainly the religion of the *North-Americans*, and even that of the *Negroes* in *Africa*, is preferable to that of the civilized nations above-mentioned, or that of the *Mexicans* and *Peruvians* on the same continent, who yet were much farther advanced in the arts of life.

It is evident, therefore, that true religion, consisting in the knowledge and sole worship of the one true God, of the maxims of his righteous government, and of the destination of man to survive the grave, must necessarily have been derived from revelation. All ancient history, and every view of the present state of the world, and especially of the most enlightened inhabitants of it, as the *Hindoos* and *Chinese*, must convince every competent and candid observer of this great truth. He must be satisfied that the world would never, *by its own wisdom*, (to use the language of the apostle, 1 *Cor.* i. 21,) have attained to the true knowledge of God, or any thing that deserves to be called rational and useful religion. It is *by the gospel* only that *life and immortality have been brought to light.* 2 *Tim.* i. 10.

Perhaps the most satisfactory account of the knowledge of the *Greeks*, the most intelligent of all the ancients, on the subjects of philosophy and religion, will be found in the works of *Cicero*, who was well acquainted with their writings, and who has given the substance of them in his own. How little they knew on this subject, confessed by him to be of the greatest importance, may be seen in his treatise on *the Nature of the Gods*, in the introduction to which he writes as follows:

“As many things in philosophy are not sufficiently clear, so the question concerning *the nature of the gods*, which is in itself the most interesting, and necessary for the regulation of religion, is attended with peculiar difficulty. And so various and discordant are the opinions of the most learned on the subject, that it affords a good argument for the *Academics* to withhold their assent to propositions that are uncertain, and to maintain that ignorance is the foundation of philosophy.

“With respect to this question, the greater part hold what is most probable, viz. that there are gods. But *Protagoras* doubted of it, and *Diagoras* of *Melos*, and *Theodorus* of *Cyrene*, held that there are none. And of those who supposed that there are gods, their opinions are so various, that it is difficult to enumerate them. Much has been advanced concerning the form of the gods, the place of their habitation, and their employment; and on these subjects there

has been much disputation among the philosophers. But the principal difference among them, and a subject on which every thing depends, is, whether the gods undertake to do nothing in the government of the world, or whether every thing was originally constituted, and is still directed by them, and will be so for ever. Till this be decided, men must be in much error about things of the greatest importance.

“For there are, and have been, philosophers who have maintained that the gods take no care of human affairs; and if this doctrine be true, what foundation can there be for piety or religion? This will be due to them if they be noticed by them, and if, in return, they render any services to men. But if the gods neither can, nor will, do any thing for us, and give no attention to our conduct, why should we render them any kind of worship, or pray to them? Then will piety be mere hypocrisy, and all religion will be at an end; and this will be attended with the greatest confusion in the business of life. Nay, I do not know but that, with the loss of religion, the foundation of all confidence of men in society, and even of justice, the most important of the virtues, would be taken away.

“But there are other philosophers, and those of the first distinction, who think that the world is governed by the mind and will of the gods, that by them every thing in the course of nature is provided for the use of man; and they express themselves in such a manner, as if they thought the gods themselves were made for the use of men. Against these *Carneades** has advanced so much, as to excite per-

* Chief of the *New Academy*, concerning the principle of which Cicero says, (*De Nat. Deor.* L. i. 5,) “Profecta à Socrate, repetita ab Arcesila, confirmata à Carneade, usque ad nostram viguit ætatem,” (introduced by Socrates, improved by Arcesilas, perfected by Carneades, it has flourished to our age).

Carneades, who was a native of *Cyrene*, died 129 B. C., at a very advanced age. On a mission from the *Athenians to Rome*, he so interested “the Roman youth” by his eloquence, that *Cato* “was afraid they would prefer books to arms.” *Carneades* might, in other times, have well become an *Attorney-General*, and at length, a *Judge*; for he “harangued in favour of justice one day, and the next day against it, to the admiration of all who heard him.” *Quintilian*, however, “remarks, that he acted himself according to the strict rules of justice.”

The following maxim has been attributed to *Carneades*: “If a man privately knew that his enemy, or any other person, whose death might be of advantage to him, would come to sit down on grass in which there lurked an asp, he ought to give him notice of it, though it were in the power of no person whatsoever to blame him for being silent.” *Plutarch* assigns to this philosopher the opinion that “Princes learn nothing well but riding; for their masters flatter them, and those who wrestle with them suffer themselves to be thrown: but a horse considers not whether a private man or a prince, a poor man or a rich, be on his back; and if his rider cannot rule him, he throws him.” See *Middleton’s Life of Cicero*, Ed. 2, 1741, III. p. 329; *Plutarch in Vita Catonis*; *Gen. Biog. Dict.* III. pp. 155, 156.

sons of any curiosity to investigate the truth. For there is no subject about which not only the unlearned, but even the learned, differ so much; and their opinions are so various and discordant, that only one of them can be true, though they may all be erroneous.”*

Such was the last and most improved state of the *theory* of religion among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, and it certainly exhibits darkness rather than light. Among the latest improvement in the *practice* of Heathenism, before it was entirely abolished by the rational principles of Christianity, was the *tauribolium*, the *criobolium*, or *ægibolium*, according as the victim was a bull, a ram, or a goat.† We find no mention of this extraordinary ceremony before the time of the sons of *Constantine*, and the most particular description

* “Cum multæ res in philosophia nequaquam satis adhuc explicatæ sint, tum perdifficilis, et perobscura quæstio est de *natura Deorum*; quæ ad agnitionem animi pulcherrima est, et ad moderandam religionem necessaria. De qua tam variæ sunt doctissimorum hominum tamque discrepantes sententiæ, ut magno argumento esse debeat, causam, id est, principium philosophiæ, esse *scientiam*, [*inscientiam*. See *Lect. Var.*] prudenterque *Academicos* à rebus incertis assensionem cohibuisse.

“In hac questione, plerique (quod maxime veri simile est, et quo omnes duce natura vehimur), Deos esse dixerunt: dubitare se *Protagoras*: nullos esse omnino *Diagoras Melius* et *Theodorus Cyrenaicus* pautaverunt. Qui vero Deos esse dixerunt, tanta sunt in varietate ac dissensione, ut eorum molestum sit dinumerare sententias. Nam et de figuris Deorum, et de locis atque sedibus, et actione vitæ, multa dicuntur: deque his summa philosophorum dissensione certatur: quod vero maxime rem causamque continet, utrum nihil agant, nihil moliantur, ac ab omni curatione et administratione rerum vacent: an contra ab his et à principio omnia facta et constituta sint, et ad infinitum tempus regantur atque moveantur, in primis quoque magna dissensio est: eaque nisi dijudicatur, in summo errore necesse est homines atque in maximarum rerum ignoratione versari.

“Sunt enim philosophi, et fuerunt, qui omnino nullam habere censerent rerum humanarum procuracionem Deos. Quorum si vera sententia est, quæ potest esse pietas? quæ sanctitas? quæ religio? Hæc enim omnia, purè atque castè tribuenda Deorum numini ita sunt, si animadvertuntur ab his, et si est aliquid à Dis immortalibus hominum generi tributum. Sin autem Dî neque possunt nos juvare, nec volunt; nec omnino curant; nec, quid agamus, animadvertunt; nec est quod ab his ad hominum vitam permanere possit; quid est quòd ullos Dis immortalibus cultus, honores, preces adhibeamus? In specie autem fictæ simulationis, sicut reliquæ virtutes, ita pietas inesse non potest; cum qua simul et sanctitatem et religionem tolli necesse est: quibus sublati, perturbatio vitæ sequitur et magna confusio. Atque haud scio, an pietate adversus Deos sublata, fides etiam, et societas generis humani, et una excellentissima virtus, justitia tollatur.

“Sunt autem alii philosophi, et hi quidem magni atque nobiles, qui Deorum mente atque ratione omnem mundum administrari et regi censeant: neque verò id solum, sed etiam ab iisdem vitæ hominum consuli et provideri:—multaque, quæ dicuntur in his libris, colligunt; quæ talia sunt, ut *ea ipsa* [*et ipsi*. See *Lect. Var.*]. Dî immortales ad usum hominum fabricati pænè videantur. Contra quos *Carnæades* ita multa disseruit, ut excitaret homines non socordes ad veri investigandi cupiditatem. Res enim nulla est, de qua tanto opere non solum indocti, sed etiam docti dissentiant: quorum opiniones cum tam variæ sint tamque inter se dissidentes; alterum profectò fieri potest, ut earum nulla, alterum certè non potest, ut plus unâ vera sit.” *De Natura Deorum*, L. i. S. 1, 2, *Glasg.* 1741, pp. 1—3. See Vol. II. p. 99.

† See Vol. XI. pp. 22, 177.

of it is in a poem of *Prudentius*,* who lived in the reign of *Theodosius*. But I cannot think with *Van Dale*,† who has thrown much light on the subject,‡ that it bore any relation, direct or indirect, to Christianity. Every thing belonging to it was purely Heathen; the object being a mystical purification, or renovation, in a sacrifice to the mother of the gods, and such as was promised in the *Eleusinian* and other *mysteries*, or *initiations*, and the effect was supposed to continue twenty years, after which it was repeated. Both men and women were thus initiated, or renovated. But it was frequently performed at the expense of cities or provinces, for the safety of the emperor, or on some other public account; and then the person on whom it was performed was a priest, or public magistrate; and it was done in the following manner:

Being habited in a rich and peculiar dress, he took his station in a place covered with boards, but full of chinks and perforations. Over this the bull, or other victim, was sacrificed with the usual preparation and ceremonies; and as the blood flowed upon these boards, and ran in streams

* "Two books, entitled, against Symmachus, or against the Oration of Symmachus.—The first is a confutation of Gentilism." See *Lardner*, V. p. 181, IX. p. 145; *Gen. Biog. Dict.* 1784, X. p. 482; *Prudence* in *Nouv. Dict. Hist.*, where it is said of his poems, that "l'orthodoxie n'y est pas toujours scrupuleusement gardée."

† "A learned Hollander, born in 1638. He quitted commerce at thirty years of age, and took the degrees in physic, which he practised with success, and obtained a high reputation all over Europe for his profound erudition. He died at Haerlem, physician to the hospital there, in 1708." *Gen. Biog. Dict.* XII. p. 297.

A *Roman Catholic* biographer says, "*Van Dale* étoit un homme d'un caractère doux et d'une probité exacte. Il entendoit plaisanterie sur ses ouvrages, ce qui n'est pas une petite qualité dans un érudit." *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* V. p. 667.

Le Clerc says of *Van Dale*, in his *Bibliothèque*, as translated by *Jortin*, "His conversation was lively and entertaining, and he delivered his sentiments without reserve. Sworn enemy to superstition and hypocrisy, he ridiculed them openly; which hurt him, as I have been told, on some occasions. He died physician to the poor, and to the hospital of Haerlem, which office he exercised with great application and assiduity, though he was extremely attached to his studies." *Remarks*, 1752, II. pp. 67, 68.

Anthony Van Dale belonged to the Christian community who were very improperly termed *Anabaptists*. He is now chiefly known by his *Dissertations De Oraculis Veterum Ethnicorum*. In these he maintained, against the vulgar notions, that *Oracles* are not attributable to *diabolical* agency, but solely to *priestcraft*; that they survived the *advent* of Christ, and did not entirely cease till the abolition of *Paganism*, on the civil establishment of Christianity. *Van Dale's* very learned work was abridged and his *theory* exhibited in an attractive form by *Fontenelle*, in the *Histoire des Oracles*, which was "made English by Mrs. Behn," in 1718. There was another English translation in 1750, by Mr. S. Whatley. *Moebius*, a *Lutheran* divine, wrote against *Van Dale*, and *Baltus*, a *Jesuit*, against *Fontenelle*. See *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* I. pp. 302, 303, IV. p. 538; Dr. Z. Grey's *Examination* of Sir I. Newton's "Remarkable Chapter of the *Mahuzzims*," in his "Observations upon Daniel," 1736, pp. 59—66.

† In his "Dissertatio de Origine ac Ritibus Sacri Taurobilii." See *Dissertationes*, 17X. *Ann.* 1702, pp. 1—174.

through the chinks and perforations, he greedily caught it on his head, face, nose, ears, mouth, and in all the folds of his clothes, covering himself with it as much as he possibly could. He then came out, and was gazed at with the greatest respect and veneration by the spectators; and if it was on his own account, he wore that dress till he could wear it no longer, as was done with all the clothes in which persons were initiated in other mysteries.*

When the ceremony was performed on a public account, it often continued many days, several persons, no doubt, receiving the blood in this manner, and several victims being sacrificed. In *Van Dale's* tract on this subject are many monumental inscriptions, which shew that this rite was frequently performed for the safety of Heathen, and even of some Christian, emperors. *Voltaire*, who could see nothing offensive in the religious rites of the *Greeks* or *Romans*, might not have been disgusted with this, and have thought it more decent than the rites of the *Mosaic* religion. It is evident from many public inscriptions, that during the time of the Heathen emperors, it was a rite of religion on which more stress was laid, and from which more real benefit was expected, than from any other whatever. To persons who are really unprejudiced, it must therefore appear, that in the most improved state of the world, before the prevalence of Christianity, the practices of the Heathens were no less absurd than their principles; and, consequently, that there was no reasonable prospect of mankind, without the aid of revelation, growing wiser or better.

4. It is the antecedent improbability of miracles that, I believe, weighs the most with modern *unbelievers* in their rejection of revelation.† But this will be much lessened in the eye of a philosopher, who duly reflects on the infinite magnitude, and the infinite wisdom, of the works of creation, (for in these reflections I must suppose the existence of a creator, or an intelligent first cause,) which exceed our power of comprehension. In whatever it may be supposed to reside, there must be some where a *mind* that comprehends the whole. For, vast as it is, the whole universe is but one, and, therefore, so must be its author.

Now, in this immense universe we see an attention to the greatest and the smallest objects at the same time. There

* See the description, by *Prudentius*, in *Van Dale's Dissert.* pp. 34, 35.

† See this objection in *Hume's Phil. Ess.* (x.), examined by *Price* in *Dissert.* (IV. 2), pp. 384—439.

are plants and animals too, which the greatest magnifying powers of our best microscopes can barely, if at all, discover, as well as elephants, crocodiles, and whales; and minute as their structure is, it is equally elaborate, and as perfectly adapted to their situation. It is but little that, after the study of ages, we yet know of this stupendous frame. But can we think it probable that it was never designed to be better understood, and not merely in succession, by beings who only just look at it, and then close their eyes for ever? Every individual man is capable of an endless advance in knowledge, and in virtue too, of which we at present only see enough to convince us that he is capable of it.

If we may be allowed to form our ideas of the Supreme Intelligence from our own, (and we have nothing else to guide us in our speculations on this subject,) we may say, Does any person ever execute a work, the knowledge of which he wishes for ever to keep to himself? I do not ascribe vanity to the Supreme Being, because that implies courting the applause of beings not only similar, but equal, or superior to ourselves; but I think the analogy of all intelligence must carry us so far as to suppose that, whatever was the object of our Creator, (and he must have had some object,) the growing knowledge, and consequent improvement, of the rational part of his creation, by means of that knowledge, must be subservient to it, and therefore a part of it.

If such a being as the Supreme be *happy*, and we necessarily ascribe this perfection to him who is possessed of infinite wisdom and infinite power, it must consist in, or be derived from, something. In other and plainer terms, he must take pleasure in something. We all agree in saying it must be in contemplating the happiness of his creatures, and especially the higher orders of them. Now, would any parent be as well pleased with a succession of children, all of them dying after they had attained the age of three or four years, though as happy as their natures would admit of in that infantine state, as in seeing them grow up to manhood, continually improving, and enjoying superior kinds of happiness as long as he himself lived?

Now, in the eye of the Supreme Being, the longest lived of the human race, even the antediluvian patriarchs, are but as infants of a year or a month old. And can it be supposed that the Being who produced them, and, consequently, had what we must call an affection for them, can see them perish in that infantine state? Must such men as *Noah*, *Abraham*,

Moses, and *Jesus*; such men as *Socrates*, *Plato*, and *Aristotle*; such men as *Alexander*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Charles XII.*, perverted as their great powers were; such men as *Voltaire*, *Rousseau*, and *Hume*, whose powers were more perverted, be lost for ever; while, whatever was the state of their minds when they died, their capacity for improvement was not destroyed?

Let me add farther, in pursuance of the same analogy, pleasing, and I hope not deceitful; Does a parent take particular pleasure in rectifying the mistakes of his children, in teaching them what they do not know, bearing with and correcting their perverse humours and follies, and advancing them in all respects by degrees; and will there not be *joy in heaven*, to adopt the language of the *New Testament*, (*Luke* xv. 7,) in opening the eyes of such men as are mentioned above, and especially in making them, after the example of *Paul*, the instruments of as much good as they have been of evil, to their species? They have already sufficient *power*, and only want a better direction of it; in fact, more *knowledge*. In the eye of the universal Parent, what are all the errors and all the vices of men in this life more than the faults of young children in ours? We do not love them the less, but are more assiduous in our endeavours to correct and improve them, though the rod is often necessary for that purpose.

No person who contemplates the universe, or any part of it, can say that there is any want of *power* in the author of it to effect this purpose, or any other that is in itself proper and desirable. That power can bring all the persons above-mentioned, and all the human race, on the stage of existence and action once more. And if the Supreme Being has, in any method that is intelligible to us, signified that he *will* do this, can we doubt the accomplishment of it? The *end* is worthy of the great and benevolent Father of all, and he cannot want the *means* of effecting it. And, according to the present state of our knowledge, this end cannot be accomplished in any other way than by the resurrection of mankind at some future period. No philosopher will say that this end can be accomplished on any other plan of which we have any knowledge, now that the doctrine of an immaterial soul, capable of thinking and acting independently of the body, is exploded.

Whether the Divine Being *has* made any declaration of this kind to any of our race, to be by them communicated

to the rest, may, no doubt, be ascertained by proper evidence. Any fact that is the object of our senses may be ascertained by human testimony. Nothing, therefore, is wanting to our rational conviction in this case, but a credible account of miracles having been wrought for this purpose. For this, as something above the power of man, and what can only be performed by the power or permission of God, is the only seal of a divine commission. And if the history of Jesus, as contained in the writings of the *Evangelists*, be true, this has been done in the fullest and most satisfactory manner possible.

Now let the evidence of the facts recited in the gospel history, and the *Acts of the Apostles*, be subjected to the most rigorous examination, according to the well-known rules for estimating the value of human testimony; and certainly the object is deserving of it. The man who does not feel a deep interest in the inquiry must have a mind exceedingly debased, and deserve to be ranked, as indeed he ranks himself, with the brutes that perish.

5. We see in the history of the *Hindoo* institutions the actual power of religion on the minds of men; for, unquestionably, nothing but the firmest persuasion of the reality of what is *not seen* could make the Hindoos submit to the dreadful austerities which are daily practised by many of them, both men and women; exposing themselves to certain and torturing deaths, as has been their custom from time immemorial.

6. We see by the *Hindoos*, that accounts of divine interpositions do not necessarily, or naturally, appear incredible to men. According to them, their god *Vichnou* has appeared in various forms, to suit himself to the exigencies of the world, and he is still to appear in others. So the people of *Lystra*, (*Acts* xiv. 12,) took *Barnabas* to be *Jupiter*, and *Paul* to be *Mercury*, the moment they saw something above human power to be performed by them.

It has been the belief of the great bulk of mankind in all ages, that, besides the visible causes of events, there is an agency of invisible ones in all the affairs of men. Nothing is more evidently owing to the exertion of human power and skill than the favourable issue of battles; and yet the event has so often been the reverse of what was expected from all the known previous circumstances, that in all ages men have depended as much on the aid of some divinity as on the number and valour of the troops, or the skill of the

commander ; and the *god of battles* has always been worshipped with peculiar devotion.

That mankind are not naturally or universally incredulous on the subject of religion, is evident even from the conduct of some who have been the most incredulous with respect to the *Jewish* and *Christian* revelations ; since they have been firm believers in other religions, and those the most absurd. The emperors *Marcus Aurelius* and *Julian*, the great boasts of modern *unbelievers*, for their superior understanding and virtue, were slaves to their own superstition, now universally exploded.* *Julian* sacrificed so many horned cattle, that it was commonly said, that if he reigned long, the breed would fail ; and he gave into the absurd practices of divination and necromancy.† The most eminent philosophers of that age, the later *Platonists*, believed themselves to have supernatural illuminations, and they practised various rites with a view to procure them.‡

It is reported, and I doubt not with truth, that some modern *unbelievers* have been afraid of being in the dark, and that in gaming they have discovered a propensity to faith in that nonentity *fortune* ; thinking that success depended on trifling circumstances which could have no more relation to it than the flight of a bird in the Roman *auguries*. How then can it be said that religion is either *incredible*, or an *unsuitable* instrument with which to work on the minds of men ? And why may it not be employed by the Divine Being, who, as he made men, must know what they are, to answer his great and benevolent purposes with respect to them ?

Philosophy, it will be said, shews the folly of believing in the interposition of any invisible powers with respect to the event of a battle, and the affairs of men in general ; since they evidently depend on the previous circumstances, though they are not always known at the time, and that our ignorance of this sufficiently accounts for the event not always corresponding to the previous expectation of the most sagacious of men. But then a higher philosophy, and no less true, teaches us that all these previous circumstances were foreseen, and intended by that mind which planned, and which superintends the whole system of nature ; and, therefore, that there is a *Providence*, particular as well as general,

* See Vol. IV. pp. 511, 512.

† See Vol. IV. p. 512 ; Vol. VIII. pp. 395—397.

‡ See a remarkable *Divination* in A. D. 374, Vol. IV. p. 513.

respecting all the affairs of men, and, consequently, a real foundation for religion.

An attention to the analogies in nature will teach us that a Being who thought proper, for whatever reasons, to make the world, and to place such creatures as men in it, must have sufficient reason for giving constant attention to them ; and if, on their part, an attention to him and to his providence be of any use to men, with respect to his final object, he would take the most proper method to engage that attention. Now this attention is evidently more effectually gained by occasional, than by constant and uniform appearances. How few persons give any attention to the regular rising and setting of the sun, the periodical returns of summer and winter, and other constant appearances, so as to make any inquiry into the causes of them ; when they are struck in the most forcible manner by storms, earthquakes, and other uncommon and irregular appearances ! And yet the great Author of nature is as much concerned in the one as in the other. They must, therefore, know little of human nature, who think that divine interpositions are an improper means of conveying instruction to man. And yet these are the persons who call themselves exclusively *philosophers*.*

To a truly philosophical or reflecting mind it will, no doubt, appear, that we are equally dependent upon God for what is imparted originally, and provided for in the usual course of nature, as for what is imparted occasionally ; but mankind in general we see, in fact, are not so apt to be *impressed* by it, and, therefore, an habitual sense of our dependence upon God (which is of the greatest use to the moral improvement of man) is better gained by that system which is best calculated to remind man of that dependence, than by one that is less adapted to gain that end. A wise parent, who wishes to have his child sensible of his dependence upon him, and his obligation to him, will not give him his whole fortune at once, and thereby make him inde-

* "They terminate their views in the objects of sense, and forget all superior and invisible power. They consider the Deity as either withdrawn from the world to enjoy repose in the extramundane spaces ; or, if necessarily present to it, as an idle and vain-glorious being, who is above concerning himself with any thing in it. —This has been too true of even some who have been distinguished by the name of *philosophers* ; but it is impossible that they should have any just title to that character.—Such a way of thinking is no less repugnant to true philosophy, than it is miserably gloomy and discouraging." Price's *Dissert.* (on *Providence*), pp. 175, 176.

pendent of himself and his future bounty. And does not the same reason, in the nature of things and of man, apply to the case of our Universal Parent? On this account, therefore, as well as others, revealed religion is a better system, more adapted to human nature than that which is termed *natural*, could the principles of it be ever so easily and clearly ascertained, which they by no means are.*

Insuperable difficulties occur to us in the consideration, though not of the being of God, yet in that of his moral attributes, and the maxims of his moral government, from the mere light of nature; and no light at all could we, from this source of knowledge, get into a future state of existence. Consequently, if the proper *rule of life* could be discovered, a sufficient *motive* to the practice of it would be wanting. Now revelation supplies both these defects, and leaves us at no loss whatever, either with respect to what we must do to secure the favour of our Maker here, or our happiness hereafter.

* Mr. Thomas Christie, in his "Remarks on the *Historia Doctrinæ de vero Deo* of Professor Meiners," has made the following observations:

"Dr. Tillotson, Cudworth, and others, were not quite accurate, when they asserted, that the idea of God was so extremely natural to the human mind. That religion of nature, of which they have spoken so much, was in reality the fragments of a religion of revelation. If by God be only meant some power superior to man, that to be sure will readily be acknowledged and firmly retained by all men, because all must discover operations going on in the universe around them, to which human power is not equal. But the vulgar never referred these operations to one great Agent.—If I should grant Dr. Tillotson, that the idea of ONE INFINITE ALL-PERFECT BEING is congenial to a few (one of a million) superior minds, and, when revealed to these, would be firmly retained ever after, I cannot, however, make any such concession with respect to the bulk of mankind. They have, in every age, been prone to forget and forsake the GREAT JEHOVAH, to worship gods more levelled to their low minds; and have, not without the greatest difficulty, been prevented from exchanging the CREATOR of ALL for inferior beings, the work of his hands.

"These facts tend strongly to confirm me in the opinion, that the knowledge of God is *foreign* to the human mind. What men discovered, men would have retained, would have improved, would have freed from every opinion hostile and repugnant to it. But this noble plant is not a native of the human mind, but a fair exotic, transplanted from richer climes, nourished with difficulty in the cold soil of earth, and ever hastening to decay, when it is not recruited by a sun-beam from that country where it received its existence." *Miscellanies*, pp. 348—352.

REMARKS

ON

M. DUPUIS'S

ORIGIN OF ALL RELIGIONS.*

————— Sobrius ergo
Dic aliquid dignum promissis. Incipe. Nil est.

Horace.†

INTRODUCTION.

THIS work of M. Dupuis's‡ is certainly the most extraordinary production of the present, or of any preceding age, and the *ne plus ultra* of infidelity. For, after giving his opinion that the five books of Moses are a mere *Arabian tale*, by which he must mean a fictitious story, that the whole of the evangelical history is another fiction, that no such persons as *Jacob* and his twelve sons, or *Christ* and his twelve apostles, ever existed, but were intended to denote the sun, and the twelve signs of the *Zodiac*, nothing more contrary to the opinion of all mankind hitherto can be asserted.

Yet with this extreme of dogmatism, M. Dupuis pretends to advance no opinion of his own. "I analyze," he says, "the opinions of others, but am careful not to give any of my own.—I am only the historian of the opinions of other persons,"§ But where can we find the strange opinions that I have recited? That there never was such a person

* "Origine de tous les Cultes, ou Religion Universelle. Par Dupuis, Citoyen François. A Paris, L' An III. de la République." 3 Tom, 4to. See *supra*, p. 133.

† L. ii. Sat. iii. l. 5.

Redeem your pledge, and dictate sober sense;
Begin. Alas! 'tis all a vain pretence.

‡ See *supra*, p. 87.

§ *Origine* (Pref.), p. vii. (P.) "J' analyse les opinions des autres, et me garde bien d'en créer une.—Je ne suis que l'historien des opinions des autres." *Ibid.*

as Jesus Christ, has, indeed, been advanced by M. *Volney*;* but he does not quote M. *Volney* for it; and it is commonly said that M. *Volney* had this opinion from M. *Dupuis*,† and not M. *Dupuis* from him. Does M. *Dupuis* give no opinion of his own, when he says, “I shall not speak of *revealed religion*, because there neither is, nor can be, any such thing”?‡ Others, no doubt, have said the same; but does M. *Dupuis* give no opinion of his own, when he avowedly adopts that of other persons?

M. *Dupuis* is as little satisfied with the enemies as with the friends of revealed religion; thinking that they have not gone on sufficiently good ground in their attacks upon it. “The philosophers of our days,” he says, “are less credulous than the common people, but they are not better informed;”§ meaning that they had not a sufficient stock of learning, and of acquaintance with antiquity, to refute it on solid principles. He has, therefore, taken quite new ground, and, no doubt, thinks that he has by this means done what they were not able to do. And a work that bears more marks of deep erudition, more ingenuity, or more labour, though accompanied with little judgment, has hardly ever appeared. But I am inclined to think with *Festus*, concerning *Paul*, (*Acts* xxvi. 24,) that *much learning has made him mad*, and deprived him of the use of his reasoning powers. This must either be his case, or that of all the world besides, and whether he be right or wrong, he will be *outvoted*.|| We must either adopt this *hypothesis*, or say that his work is a mere *jeu d’esprit*, that he was not in earnest in writing it, but wished to make an experiment, how far confident assertion, and an appearance of deep learning, accompanied with ingenuity, could go in imposing on the world. But this work is too large, and too dull to be a *jeu d’esprit*. The other *hypothesis*, therefore, which is the only alternative in the case, is the more probable of the two; for if he be in earnest, his mind must have suffered a considerable degree of derangement.

* See Vol. XVI. p. 8; *supra*, pp. 9, 83—86, 121.

† See *supra*, p. 87.

‡ *Origine* (*Pref.*), I. p. viii. (P.) “Je ne parlerai point des Religions révélées, parce qu’il n’en existe point, et qu’il n’en peut exister.” *Ibid.*

§ *Origine*, III. p. 7. (P.) “Voilà jusqu’où sont arrivés de nos jours les philosophes. Ils sont moins crédules que le peuple mais ils ne sont pas plus instruits.” *Ibid.*

|| When Lee the tragedian was in a mad-house, and was asked by a stranger how he came there, he said he was outvoted. Being desired to explain himself, he replied, “I said the world was mad, and the world said I was mad, and they outvoted me.” (P.)

SECTION I.

Of the Argument concerning the Being of a God.

THAT M. Dupuis is an unbeliever in the being of a God, is equally evident with his being an unbeliever in revelation, though he asserts the contrary. "Does there exist," he says, "a God, a supreme cause, living, intelligent, omnipotent, eternal, and incomprehensible by man? This I do not examine, because it appears to me to be clear, and because it does not enter into the plan of my work."* But he says, "There is nothing but *the universe itself* that can correspond to the immense idea which the name of *God* presents to us."†

To shew the absurdity of the common opinion concerning the being of "a God, eternal and invisible, the cause of all things," M. Dupuis says, "It was natural for man, in tracing the *causes* of things, to stop where *effects* seem to cease, and where the being takes a character different from those that are subordinate to it; and this is *nature*. It was natural to go to the *tree*, in inquiring into the cause of the *fruit*, and to the *earth* as the cause of the *tree*, both of them being produced and re-produced, and evidently *effects*. But the series of production and re-production seems to stop at the *earth*, which has no character like that which is produced and transitory. There also terminate the researches of men with respect to the progression of causes; for we must stop somewhere. An infinite progression of causes is an absurdity; and since we must stop somewhere, why go beyond the boundary where we see it to terminate?"‡

* *Origine (Pref.)*, p. vii. (P.) "Existe-t-il un Dieu, ou une cause suprême, vivante, intelligente, souverainement puissante, éternelle, et incompréhensible à l'homme? C'est ce que je n'examine pas, et que je crois inutile d'examiner; non-seulement parce que cela me paroît clair, mais encore, parce que cette question n'entre pas dans le plan de mon ouvrage." *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* p. x. (P.) "Il n'est resté que l'univers lui-même, qui pût soutenir l'immense idée que le nom de Dieu doit présenter." *Ibid.*

‡ *Origine*, l. p. 2. (P.) "Il étoit naturel aux hommes de s'arrêter où les effets sembloient finir, et où l'être prend un caractère différent de celui qu'ont tous ceux qui lui sont subordonnés; cet être étoit la nature. Il étoit nécessaire de remonter jusqu'à l'arbre, pour y chercher la cause du fruit, et jusques à la terre, pour y trouver celle de l'arbre; l'un et l'autre produits et reproduits, étoient évidemment des effets; mais la série des productions et des reproductions paroissant finir à la terre, qui n'offroit rien de ce qui caractérise l'être produit et passager, là finirent aussi les recherches de l'homme sur la progression des causes." *Ibid.*

Of all the methods of stating the argument against the being of a God, this is, surely, the most palpably defective. If any thing in argumentation be more evident than another, it is, that the cause must be equal to the effect. *Must not he that formed the eye see, [Ps. xciv. 9,] and he that gave understanding to man, himself understand? [Ver. 10.]* An effect in which there are evident marks of *design*, must have a designing or intelligent cause; and are there not marks of design in the tree, as well as in its fruit? The structure of the most insignificant plant exceeds the comprehension of any man; and yet we are to look no farther for the cause of this exquisite production than the *earth* in which it grows, and which discovers no mark of intelligence at all; nay, is more remote from it than the plant itself. If we take in the whole of the earth, with all its lands, seas, rivers, and mountains, we perceive no more appearance of an intelligent principle residing in it than in a single stone; and if we farther take in the whole solar system, the sun, moon, and stars, we make no nearer approach to the idea of intelligence. These are even more evidently *effects*, and their arrangement and the laws to which they are subject evidently suppose a superior and designing cause. And if this cause be not visible, it must be something that is invisible to us. It is not more evident that the fruit implies a tree, which M. *Dupuis* allows, than that the whole system implies this cause. And since nothing that is *finite* is equal to the effect, it must be a Being that is *infinite*, and likewise eternal; for every person must allow, that if ever there had been a time in which nothing existed, nothing could ever have existed. Difficult, therefore, as it is to conceive the existence of such a Being, we are left in an infinitely greater difficulty without the supposition.

It would follow from M. *Dupuis's* mode of reasoning, that providing any person had no opportunity of looking into a watch, or of seeing the person who wound it up, it would be reasonable for him to conclude that it was a self-existent and a self-moving machine. For, what is the whole visible system of the universe but a machine, the structure and the maker of which we do not see? Does a *telescope* require a maker, and the *eye* require none? Or, could the earth, together with the sun, moon, and stars, make either an eye or a telescope?

Provided, however, that what is visible in the universe in general, or the earth only, nay, a single stone in it, *can* be

conceived to be possessed of intelligence, and the other attributes of divinity, the effect upon the mind would be the same as if they were ascribed to any thing invisible ; because they are the *attributes* of divinity by which the mind is impressed, and not any *substance* in which they are supposed to inhere. If I really believe that any being whatever was the author of my existence, that he supports me in life, gives constant attention to me, prescribes to me a rule of conduct, and will reward or punish me for my observance or neglect of it, this faith will have the same practical effect, whether it be any thing visible or invisible that is possessed of these powers. But it appears to me that there is an insuperable difficulty in conceiving that these powers *can* be possessed by any thing that is the object of our senses ; and, therefore, to pretend, with M. *Dupuis*, that there is no other being to whom we have to look than the earth, is, in effect, to adopt the principles of absolute Atheism.

The belief of a God, as the maker and governor of the world, greatly facilitates the belief of revelation. For, if the laws of nature be conceived to be nothing but the appointment of God, or, in fact, the mode in which he himself constantly operates, from a general preference of that particular mode of action, as best calculated to answer the purposes that he has in view, it is not difficult to conceive that his choice of a mode of action may change with circumstances, and that, though in general he chooses to act in an uniform manner, he may see sufficient reason occasionally to depart from it ; because this is what we frequently observe in those men whose general conduct is the most uniform ; and it is natural to judge concerning one intelligent agent by another, though the difference in rank be ever so great.

M. *Dupuis* evidently considers all accounts of supernatural interposition as absolutely incredible. But the readiness with which such interpositions have been believed by all mankind, in all ages, amounts almost to a proof that there have been such interpositions. A philosopher should inquire whence this *credulity*, or proneness to believe in this case, could have arisen. Like every other effect, it must have been generated by some adequate *cause*, as also is the prevailing incredulity in modern times. As this arises, in a certain state of mind, from men's having no *experience* of any such thing, and from their want of faith in the testi-

mony of others, the reverse of this must have arisen from such experience either in themselves, or in those persons whose veracity they saw no reasonable cause to doubt.

It is usual, though it is very unphilosophical, to say, that *the vulgar* may easily be made to believe any thing. But it should be considered *what things* they are easily made to believe. They are only things analogous to their present belief. In other respects, the vulgar are the least credulous, and the most attached to the principles they hold. For this reason, all ancient opinions and practices remain the longest with the common people in all countries, and innovations always begin with persons of a philosophical or speculative turn, the free and bold thinkers of the age; and these are never numerous. They are those who readily see remote analogies of things, by means of which new and unexpected truths are discovered. Such persons are often too apt to pride themselves in departing from the sentiments and practices of the vulgar, whom they sometimes treat with undeserved contempt.

We must not forget that the minds of all men, the vulgar or the speculative, are mechanical things; and that neither particular opinions, nor a disposition to form or retain them, are produced without a cause, which it is the business of philosophy to investigate; and nothing is more unphilosophical than indiscriminate exclamations against whole bodies of men, the *Vulgar*, *Barbarians*, *Negroes*, *Jews*, &c. &c., as universally stupid, and men whose opinions it is not worth our while to inquire about, or to account for.

SECTION II.

Of the Age of the World.

NOTWITHSTANDING M. Dupuis's declaration, that he had no opinion of his own to advance, no man living has advanced more extraordinary ones, and such as, I believe, are peculiar to himself. One of them is concerning the great antiquity of astronomical observations, and, consequently, of civilization and the origin of mankind. "The *epocha* of the invention of the *Zodiac*," he says, "goes farther back than the time fixed by our chronologers for the creation of the world, which I am far from believing; for

it appears to me to have been eternal.”* According to M. *Dupuis*, “the origin of astronomy was fourteen or fifteen thousand years before the Christian era.”† “Of this,” he says, “the argument from the zodiac is a kind of demonstration, unless we suppose that the signs had their names given them at random, without any design.”‡

His object in this argument was, no doubt, to invalidate the history of Moses, according to which the origin of civilization, and of mankind, could not have been much more than four or five thousand years before our era, which is more than ten thousand years short of the date that M. *Dupuis* assigns to it. But whatever mistake Moses may have fallen into with respect to this subject, or any events a thousand years before his own time, he may have been a competent witness of what passed under his own eye; so that it was hardly worth M. *Dupuis*'s while to take so much pains with the subject. Since, however, his argument is curious, I shall give a little attention to it.

It is founded on the idea which has been pretty generally entertained, though without any direct proof, that the names of the twelve signs of the *zodiac* relate to the seasons of the year and the labours of agriculture. But it was farther necessary to M. *Dupuis*'s purpose, that the observations should have been made, and the names given *in Egypt*. He therefore says, that “the general supposition concerning the origin of these names could not be demonstrated for want of going back, by means of the precession of the equinoxes, to an epocha sufficiently distant.”§ But going back to the time when the equinox was in *Libra*, six sigus distant from *Aries*, which is commonly supposed to be the earliest time that is known to history or even to fable, “this new position of the sphere,” he says, puts every thing into its place, and becomes a strict calendar of the climate of

* *Origine*, III. pp. 364, 365. (P.) L' époque de cette invention remonte bien au-delà du terme fixé par nos chronologistes pour la création du monde, à laquelle nous sommes bien éloignés de croire; car il nous semble éternel.” *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. p. 367. (P.) *Dupuis* represents that possibly “il y eût déjà plusieurs périodes de 25,000 ans d' achevées.” He, however, is satisfied “de reculer seulement de quatorze à quinze mille ans, avant notre siècle, l' invention, non pas de l' astronomie, mais celle des figures *hiéroglyphiques*, tracées dans le *zodiaque*.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. p. 365. (P.) “C' est une espèce de démonstration, à moins qu' on ne s' obstine à regarder les symboles tracés dans le *zodiaque*, comme des figures bizarres établies sans aucun dessein.” *Ibid*.

§ *Ibid*. p. 324. (P.) “On a soupçonné de tout temps, que les noms des signes du *zodiaque* étoient relatifs aux travaux de l' agriculture et aux variétés des saisons; mais on n' a pu le démontrer, faute de remonter par la précession des équinoxes à une époque assez éloignée.” *Ibid*.

Egypt, exclusive of every other country ;”* and “ to Egypt,” he says, “ we must look for the origin of the constellations.”†

Though the opinion of the names of the signs having a relation to the seasons of the year be merely conjectural, for we have no historical account of it, it is not destitute of probability. *Libra*, or a pair of scales, may very well denote the equal balance of day and night, supposing neither of the scales to preponderate. Also since *capricorn*, or the *wild goat*, naturally gets into the most elevated situations, browsing on what he can find on the highest mountains, it was thought to suit the place in the heavens from which the sun begins to ascend from the southern to the northern tropic. And the *crab* being an animal that goes backwards, it was thought to suit that tropic from which the sun begins to descend and return to his former place. And the sheep being turned into the fresh pastures in the spring, was thought to be well expressed by the sign *Aries*, which the sun enters at that time of the year. Thus the state of the heavens was thought to give a propriety to the names that have been fixed to the signs belonging to the *equinoxes* and the two *solstices* ; and as the constellation *Virgo* has an ear of corn in her hand, it was thought to suit the autumn, which is generally the time of harvest, when the sun enters that sign.

But this by no means satisfies M. *Dupuis*, because it does not suit the climate of *Egypt*. “ The goat,” he says, “ always ascends to the highest place, and, therefore, more naturally denotes the summer than the winter solstice.”‡ The labour of the plough in *Egypt*, is in *November*, and their harvest is in *March* ; and it is only towards the end of *August* that the sun enters *Virgo*.”§ He farther, with much ingenuity, observes, that *Aquarius* naturally denotes

* *Origine*, III. p. 329. (P.) “ Cette nouvelle position de la sphère, en renversant tout, remet tout à sa place ; le zodiaque devient le calendrier le plus frappant du climat de l’ Egypte, et convient à ce pays exclusivement à tout autre.” *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. p. 325. (P.) “ C’est à l’ Egypte que l’ on doit l’ origine des constellations.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. pp. 326, 330. (P.) “ Quant à la chèvre, sa méthode de paître est de monter toujours, et de gagner les hauteurs en broutant.” *Ibid*. p. 326. “ Le Capricorne occupe, dans notre hypothèse, un des solstices ; mais c’est le solstice d’ été, et le point le plus élevé de la course du soleil fut assigné à l’ animal, qui comme le remarque *Macrobe*, broute sur les rochers les plus escarpés, et se plaît à vivre de préférence sur la cime des montagnes ; *pendent in rupe capellæ* dit Virgile.” *Ibid*. p. 330.

§ *Ibid*. p. 328. (P.) “ Le labourage se fait dans l’ Egypte en Novembre.— C’est en Mars que la moisson commence, et ce n’ étoit que vers la fin d’ Août que le soleil entroit alors dans la Vierge.” *Ibid*.

the inundation of *Egypt*, by the overflowing of the *Nile*, which is after the summer solstice.* Also, anciently the sign of *Capricorn* had a fish annexed to it, to shew that after the summer solstice the *Nile* begins to overflow.† After the inundation, the ground being too soft for the plough, the sheep are turned into the fresh pastures, denoted by the sign of *the Ram*, which the sun at that time enters.‡ The ploughing commences after this, when the sun enters *Taurus*, the bull being used for that purpose.§ “The rapid production of vegetables immediately afterwards,” he says, “was denoted by *the Twins*, or, according to the old spheres, two young goats.”|| “The crab naturally marked the retrocession of the sun”¶ after the winter solstice, and a month after this solstice, the sun’s acquiring great power was signified by *the Lion*** And the harvest beginning in March was then denoted by *the Virgin*, with her ear of corn.††

There is certainly much ingenuity in these observations, but they amount to nothing more than a *probability* in favour of M. *Dupuis*’s argument, and his superstructure is too great to rest with safety on so slight a foundation. And, numerous as his circumstances of probability are, they are much more than balanced by another circumstance of extreme improbability, and one to which it does not appear that M. *Dupuis*

* *Origine*, III. p. 330. (P.) “Ces trois symboles aquatiques—peignant de la manière la plus claire l’état de l’Egypte, dans les trois mois qui suivent le solstice d’été. Tous les voyageurs anciens et modernes, conviennent que, peu de jours après le solstice le Nile inonde toute l’Egypte.” *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. p. 331. (P.) “Dans toutes les sphères anciennes le Capricorne est représenté par un poisson, ou uni à un poisson, ou terminé par un poisson. Ce Capricorne, demi-poisson, annonçoit le débordement du Nil, qui commençoit sous ce signe.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. p. 334. (P.) “Les eaux, que le Nil a laissées dans les endroits bas, séjournent dans plusieurs lieux, et le sol nouvellement découvert ne présente qu’un limon gras, qui n’a point encore assez de consistance, pour qu’on y imprime le soc de la charrue.—On lâchoit donc les troupeaux, et leur entrée aux pâturages fut marquée dans les cieux, par l’image d’un béliet, ou du chef du troupeau.” *Ibid*.

§ *Ibid*. (P.) “Le soleil en Novembre parcourt le Taureau céleste; et cet emblème ne fut placé dans les cieux, que comme le symbole du commencement des travaux d’un peuple agricole.” *Ibid*.

|| *Ibid*. (P.) “Les productions nouvelles et l’état d’enfance de la nature, ne pouvoient être mieux peints, que par l’emblème de deux enfans naissans, ou même, suivant les sphères orientales, par deux jeunes chevreaux, qu’une mère vient de mettre bas.” *Ibid*.

¶ *Ibid*. p. 335. (P.) “L’Ecrevisse fut l’emblème le plus naturel de cette marche rétrograde.” *Ibid*.

** *Ibid*. p. 336. (P.) “On peignit dans les cieux un lion, soit comme le symbole de la force que la végétation a déjà acquise, soit parce que la couleur de cet animal est celle des moissons dorées: *Fulvi Leones, flava aristæ*.” *Ibid*.

†† *Ibid*. p. 337. (P.) “Le signe de la Vierge répondoit alors à la plus grande partie du mois de Mars, et les moissons commençoient tous les ans sous ce signe.” *Ibid*.

has given the least attention, which is, that mankind should have advanced what he considers as a great step in science, viz. the observation of the sun's course in the heavens, the division of the *zodiac* into twelve signs, and the giving names to them and the other constellations on scientific principles, and yet have made no farther advances in more than ten thousand years after this.

The first steps in science are generally the most difficult, and one great discovery naturally prepares the way for others; whereas, according to M. *Dupuis*, after arranging the *zodiac*, neither philosophers, nor indeed mankind at large, left the least trace of their existence in the immense tract of time above-mentioned, either in sacred or profane history. For, independently of the writings of *Moses*, all the histories that have come down to us, or of which we have any account, shew that mankind, at least that civilization, (and M. *Dupuis's* hypothesis supposes a very advanced state of it,) cannot be older than he represents it to have been.

The *Chaldeans*, according to all accounts, vied with the *Egyptians* with respect to the antiquity of their astronomical observations, and M. *Dupuis* himself says, that "their observations reached farther back than two thousand years before the Christian era."* At the earliest period of true or probable history, the world was very thinly inhabited, except some parts of *Asia* and *Egypt*; all beyond was rude and barbarous, men living in a state but little above that of brutes. This was clearly the case with *Greece*, which is not very distant from *Asia*, and where the climate is remarkably fine, and every thing favourable to improvements. In a few centuries, however, the *Greeks* advanced from this rude state, to the greatest civilization. This is natural, and sufficiently agreeable to more recent facts, such as are furnished by the histories of *Mexico* and *Peru*. But that no advances whatever, of which any trace can be discovered, should be made not only in the arts of life, but even in the multiplication of the species, for the space of ten thousand years, is altogether incredible, whatever the *zodiac* may say to the contrary. Compared to this, the legend of the *seven sleepers* was a poor fiction. They were but seven persons and a dog,† and only slept about three hundred years; but here all mankind, men, women, and children, and all the dogs and cattle too,

* *Origine*, III. p. 341. (P.) "Les Chaldéens avoient une longue suite d'observations, qui remontoient à plus de 2,000 ans avant notre ère." *Ibid.*

† See Vol. XVI. p. 367.

must have slept without interruption more than ten thousand years.

According to M. *Dupuis*, the oldest system of religious worship was adopted when the *equinox* was in *Taurus*, whence arose the worship of the sun, under the form of a *bull* or *calf*; and when, in the course of the precession of the equinoxes, it was in *Aries*, the symbol of the ram or the lamb was introduced. But had mankind no worship at all in the long interval of many thousand years that elapsed from the time that the equinox was in *Libra*, to its arrival in *Taurus*? Why do we not find some trace of *the scales*, as an emblem of the Deity? All the signs, surely, from *Libra* to *Taurus*, must have had their turns in this symbolical worship of the sun; since the same causes must, we should imagine, have produced the same effects.

There is another objection to M. *Dupuis's hypothesis*, mentioned by himself, which is, that the signs of the *zodiac* may denote the places opposite to those which the sun occupied at the time, as being most open to observation, those constellations rising at sun-set.* To this, however, he gives no answer. He only says, "that, admitting this, the origin of the *zodiac* will still be in Egypt."† But it entirely overturns his opinion of the very great age of the world.

On the whole, it seems natural to suppose that since, according to M. *Dupuis*, the correspondence of the signs of the *zodiac* with the seasons of the year, and the state of agriculture, as observed by those who first noticed it, is not sufficiently exact, there is but little foundation for the hypothesis; that the names were given to the signs on some other idea, which we cannot now trace; and, that their imperfect correspondence to the seasons was only accidental. Besides, it will by many be thought that the origin of the *zodiac* was in *India*, and not in *Egypt*. On so very precarious a foundation does this great argument for the extraordinary antiquity of the world rest. M. *Dupuis* himself wavered in his opinion concerning its validity. For, though he had called it a *kind of demonstration*, he says, "I do not

* *Origine*, III. p. 340. (P.) "On pourroit dire, que les inventeurs avoient placé ces symboles, non pas dans le lieu qu'occupoit le soleil, mais dans la partie du Ciel opposée; de manière que la succession des levers du soir de chaque signe eût réglé le calendrier, et eût exprimé la marche des nuits, comme le disent Aratus et Macrobe." *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. (P.) "L'invention de l'Astronomie appartiendroit encore incontestablement à l'Egypte." *Ibid*.

lay much stress on my speculations concerning the *zodiac*. They are only conjectures ; but those on mythology have truth for their basis.”* These, therefore, I shall now proceed to examine.

M. *Volney*, however, has more confidence in this argument than M. *Dupuis*, the author of it : for he says, “ The present system may be referred with certainty, on the authority of the monuments of astronomy itself, to near seventeen thousand years.”† So much strength does good-will in any cause lend to a weak argument.

SECTION III.

Of the History and the Institutions of Moses.

THAT part of the Scripture history which all *unbelievers* think they can assail with the most advantage, and in declaiming against which they indulge themselves with the least reserve, is that which is given by *Moses*. But their opinions on the subject of his history are very various and discordant..

Mr. Gibbon calls it a *tradition* ; M. *Langles* says the five books of *Moses* are copied, at second-hand, from the five *Bedas* of the *Hindoos* ; M. *Dupuis* says they are, for the most part, a collection of *tales*, like those of the Arabs.‡ “ The history of the three companions of Daniel,” he says, “ is an Assyrian tale.”§ He also says, that the cosmogony of the Hebrews was derived from that of the ancient Persians. || “ From the *Chaldeans*,” he says, “ we have the fable of the deluge of *Xixutrus*, of which that of *Noah* of the *Hebrews*, and that of *Deucalion* of the *Greeks*, are copies.”¶ “ The author of the *Genesis* of the *Persians*,” he says, “ places

* *Origine*, III. p. 347. (P.) “ C’est le résultat de ce travail, que je présente aujourd’hui, comme un système sur l’origine du zodiaque, auquel d’ailleurs je n’attache pas la même importance, qu’à mon travail sur les religions, attendu qu’ici ce ne sont que des conjectures, et que mon travail au contraire sur la mythologie a pour base la vérité.” *Ibid.*

† *Ruines*, p. 221. (P.) See *supra*, p. 126, Note §.

‡ *Origine*, I. p. 3. (P.) “ Ce Pentateuque ne soit en grande partie qu’un recueil de contes, du genre des contes Arabes.” *Ibid.*

§ *Ibid.* I. p. 280. (P.) “ —les trois enfans que Nabuchodonosor fit jeter dans la fournaise, dans le conte Assyrien, connu sous le nom de prophétie de Daniel.” *Ibid.*

|| *Explication des Planches*, p. 12. (P.) “ La cosmogonie Hébraïque a été calquée sur celle des anciens Perses.” *Ibid.*

¶ *Ibid.* p. 202. (P.) “ C’est de la Chaldée, qu’est venue la fable du déluge de Xixutrus, dont le Noé des Hébreux, et le Deucalion des Grecs sont une copie.” *Ibid.*

his paradise in Iran, which the Hebrews have corrupted into Eden."* He seems also to have thought that the *Mosaic* history was borrowed in part from *Sanchoniathon*. For he says, that "he was the oldest writer in Phœnicia,"† in which *Palestine* is generally included; and he frequently calls the *Mosaic* history a *legend*.

But what is peculiar to M. Dupuis, is, that the principal part of this history is a *concealed allegory*, being a description of appearances in the heavens, resembling the mythology and theology of the *Egyptians*. "From the twelve great gods of Egypt," he says, "the Jews have taken the idea of their twelve patriarchs, the children of the same father, and Christians that of their twelve apostles, the companions of God, the father of light, whose death and resurrection they celebrate like that of *Adonis* in Phœnicia, and that of *Osiris* in Egypt."‡ "The breast-plate of the high-priest formed of twelve precious stones, arranged three and three, and grouped like the seasons; their twelve loaves of shew-bread, arranged six and six, as the signs of each hemisphere, have no other object than the heavens and the zodiac."§ He does not say to which of the twelve signs each of the twelve sons of Jacob corresponds, but he says, Dan, the sign of the *Scorpion*, belongs to the eighth month from Nisan, on which Jeroboam ordered the worship of the calves at Dan;|| and he seems to refer *Judah* to the constellations of the *Lion*. The twelve oxen which supported the brazen sea, in the temple of Solomon, were consecrated, he says, to the great goddess of the Tyrians, Astarte.¶ But where is M. Dupuis's authority for this consecration? He

* *Origine*, III. p. 12. (P.) "L'auteur de la Genèse des Perses place ce jardin de délices dans l'Iran, pays vraiment délicieux; il l'appelle Eren, nom que les docteurs Hébreux ont corrompu en Eden." *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. I. p. 6. (P.) "Le plus ancien écrivain de Phénicie. Euseb. *Prap. Ev.* L. i. C. ix." *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. p. 55. (P.) "Les douze grands dieux de l'Egypte se retrouvent par-tout.—Les Juifs ont pris de-là l'idée de leurs douze patriarches, enfans du même père, et les Chrétiens de leurs douze apôtres, compagnons du Dieu, père de lumière, dont ils célèbrent la mort et la résurrection, comme on célébroit celle d'Adonis en Phénicie, et celle d'Osiris en Egypte." *Ibid*.

§ *Ibid*. p. 57. (P.) "Le rational de leur grand-prêtre, formé de l'assemblage de douze pierres précieuses, rangées trois par trois, et groupées comme les saisons; leurs douze pains de proposition rangés six par six, comme les signes de chaque hémisphère n'avoient d'autre objet que le ciel et le zodiaque." *Ibid*.

|| *Ibid*. II. p. 117. (P.) "La solennité établie par Jéroboam, en honneur des veaux d'or, se célébroit au huitième mois.—Le huitième mois répondoit au huitième signe, et le huitième signe, à compter du mois Nisan ou du bélier, étoit le Scorpion, dans lequel on plaçoit la tribu de Dan." *Ibid*.

¶ *Ibid*. I. p. 61. (P.) "Les taureaux, ou douze bouvillons, qui entouroient la colonne destinée à soutenir la grande cuve, appelée *mer*, étoient consacrés à la grande déesse des Tyriens, Astarte." *Ibid*.

might with as much truth have said that the temple was consecrated to *Baal*, and that his image was erected in it.

In imitation of the Egyptians, M. *Dupuis* says, Moses consecrated the tribe of *Levi* to the sacred office.* “He fixed the month of *Nisan*, which answers to the equinoctial sign of the spring for the commencement of the *Jewish* year, in memory of the renewal of nature, after being laid waste by a pretended deluge, which was only a fiction of cosmogony.”† To mention no more of these resemblances, as copies of Heathen worship, he says, Samson, or god the sun, which the honey of *Mithra* brought to his memory, was the Philistine *Hercules*.‡ This, however, is later than the history of *Moses*.

Such are the strange opinions that have been advanced by *unbelievers*, with respect to the history and institutions of *Moses*, on which I would remark, in the first place, that they are very inconsistent with each other, and by no means correspond to the facts they propose to explain. A *tradition* is a story transmitted from one generation to another, before it was reduced to writing; for *histories* written by contemporaries are never called *traditions*. However, traditions in general are believed to be true, both by the relater and those to whom the narrative is proposed. But, though the book of *Genesis* may be said to be a traditional account, the history of the deliverance of the *Israelites* from their bondage in *Egypt*, and of their travels in the Wilderness, is no tradition. It was always believed by the nation of *Israelites* that it was written by Moses at the time: and the numerous particulars of persons, times, and places, are clearer vouchers of its having been so written, than any other history that has reached us. Such tables of genealogy as we find in *Genesis* v. x. xi. xxxvi. xlv., and in *Exodus* vi.; such accounts of the numbering of the people in each tribe as we have in *Numb.* i. ii. xxvi., and so particular an account of the marches and stations in their travels as we have *Numb.* xxxiii., are never found in *Romances*.

* *Origine*, II. (*Traité des Mystères*), p. 7. (P.) “Les Egyptiens consacrerent certaines familles par une inauguration particulière.—Le législateur des Juifs imita cet usage en consacrant la tribu de Lévi au ministère sacré.” *Ibid*.

† *Ibid.* I. p. 157. (P.) “Le législateur des Juifs fixa au mois Nisan qui répond au signe équinoxial du printemps, le commencement de l’année Judaïque, en mémoire du renouvellement de la nature, après qu’elle eut été dévastée par un prétendu déluge, que nous ferons voir ailleurs n’être qu’une fiction cosmogonique.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid.* II. (*Traité*), p. 90. (P.) “Le miel entroit de préférence dans les offrandes faites à Mithra. On voit dans Hyde le lion Mithraïque, tenant une abeille dans sa queue.—Cecime rappelle le lion de Samson, ou du dieu-soleil, l’Hercule Philistin, dans la bouche duquel étoit un rayon de miel.” *Ibid*.

There is nothing resembling these things in the *Arabian Tales*. On the contrary, they are such things as might be expected in histories composed with the greatest regard to truth and exactness. In this respect, the narrative of *Moses* exceeds *Xenophon's* of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand, or any part of the history of *Thucydides*.

A *legend* is a story generally traditional, perhaps not believed by the author, but always inculcated to gain the assent of those for whose use it is written. But this was by no means the case with the writings, or the institutions, of *Moses*. He relates the history of his own times; and the sole object of his writings was to enforce the observance of institutions to which his nation was extremely averse, and even continued to be so for several centuries afterwards. They never, however, entertained a doubt with respect to the truth of the narrative; and notwithstanding such a dispersion and sufferings as no other people ever experienced, all the *Jews* are to this day firm believers in the writings of *Moses*. And yet they contain particulars concerning their ancestors which could not but be very offensive to them.

Oriental tales are works of mere imagination, not believed to be true either by the narrator, or those who are the greatest admirers of them; which is far from being the case with respect to the writings of *Moses*. Nations do not take their codes of law, and especially institutions to which they are averse, from fictitious tales. The *Mahometans* do not do so, though their religion is such as they soon had a great attachment to; and yet with much more probability might the *Koran* be said to be an *Arabian* tale, or a legend, than the *Pentateuch*; and, that the histories alluded to in it, as the battle of *Bedr*, &c. were the invention of the writer. The *Pentateuch* contains the civil law of the *Hebrew* nation, as the *Koran* does that of the *Mahometans*, and their authority is never questioned.

That the books of *Moses* are copied from any writings of an earlier age is a mere arbitrary assertion, and altogether improbable. Where are those earlier writings to be found? Let them be produced and compared. The *Ballas** we may hope to see soon. At present we are pretty well informed concerning their general contents, and the religion they enforce; and no two systems can be more unlike than those of the *Hebrews* and the *Hindoos*. As to *Sanchoniathon*, the most learned critics are of opinion that there never was

* See *supra*, pp. 138, 144.

such a person, and that the book ascribed to him was the invention of *Porphyry*, to oppose to the *Mosaic* account of the creation, and his early history of mankind. His, however, is only the same account disguised, so that if it be no forgery, it is in a great measure a confirmation of the history of *Moses*. All that we know concerning this *Sanchoniathon* is through a quotation of a work of *Porphyry* in *Eusebius*.* We know nothing of any records of the *Chaldeans*, as those concerning the deluge, alluded to by M. *Dupuis*, but in some fragments of the writings of *Berosus*,† who was contemporary with *Alexander the Great*; or of those of the *Egyptians*, but from the writings of *Manetho*, who lived in the time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*.‡ Whereas the writings of *Moses* are extant, and open to the most critical examination. What do we know even of the titles, or subjects, of any books written by *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans* or *Phenicians*? The probability is, that there never were any such approaching to the time of *Moses*.

But of all the opinions above-mentioned, the most ingenious, but the most absurd, is that of M. *Dupuis*, viz. that the writings of *Moses* are an *astrological allegory*, and that the twelve sons of *Jacob* denote the twelve signs of the *zodiac*. I only wonder that he should allow such profound knowledge and such ingenuity to a people of whom he, with all other *unbelievers*, always speaks with the greatest contempt, as a *horde* (to use their favourite expression) of barbarous and ignorant slaves. And this profound knowledge was not confined to *Moses*, who was educated at the court of Pharaoh. For, according to M. *Dupuis*, it appears in every part of their subsequent history. *Samson*, he says, was no real person, any more than the sons of *Jacob*, but the Phenician *Hercules*, who was the sun. *Jesus*, too, was the same deity, and the twelve apostles the same signs of the *zodiac* with the twelve patriarchs. The *Apocalypse* must, according to M. *Dupuis*, be a work of by far the most profound erudition in all antiquity. And yet all those writings were the works of *Jews*.

It is, however, not a little extraordinary, that these allegorical writings should never have been understood in their

* "*Dodwell et Du-Pin rejettent ces fragmens comme supposés; mais Fourmont, et quelques autres érudits, les adoptent comme authentiques. On ne sait en quel tems vivoit cet historien.*" *Nouv. Dict. Hist.* V. p. 288, *Sanchoniathon*.

† A Priest of *Belus's* temple in Babylon. His *History of Chaldea* is quoted by *Josephus*. See *ibid.* I. p. 396, *Bérose*.

‡ B. C. 304. *Manetho* was an Egyptian priest, born at Heliopolis. He is frequently quoted by *Josephus*. See *ibid.* IV. p. 317, *Manethon*.

true sense by the people among whom they were published, and by whom they were ever held in as high esteem as were any other books by any other nation. Were the authors of these writings the only men of learning in the nation ; and were all the rest so disposed to admire what they did not understand ?

It is also extraordinary that, though, according to M. *Dupuis*, the religion of the *Hebrews* was originally the same with that of all the neighbouring nations, they should yet be so radically different. All other ancient nations, whether they acknowledged one Supreme Deity or not, worshipped a multiplicity of gods ; whereas the *Hebrews* strictly confined their worship to one. All other nations had human sacrifices, which the *Hebrews* held in the greatest abhorrence. All others had recourse to various modes of divination, and the arts of *magic* and *necromancy* ; whereas in the writings of Moses every thing of this kind, the offspring of the most miserable superstition, is treated with the greatest contempt. Could principles fundamentally the same lead to sentiments and practices so very different, nay the very reverse of one another ? Can the same tree produce the sweet orange and the sour crab ?

There is no circumstance of which M. *Dupuis* avails himself so much, or repeats so often, both with respect to the *Jewish* and the *Christian* religions, as the history of *the fall of man*, in the beginning of the book of *Genesis*. I believe with him, and have maintained in my writings, that this history is either an allegory, or founded on uncertain tradition ; that it is an *hypothesis* to account for the origin of evil, adopted by *Moses*, which by no means accounts for the facts. But how does this affect Moses's history of his own times, a history that appears from evidence internal and external, to have been written while the events were recent, and to which the whole nation bore testimony ; and more unprejudiced witnesses there could not have been in any case, from the reluctance with which they received and retained the institutions which that history was calculated to enforce.

Let M. *Dupuis* consider how his argument will apply to any similar case. Supposing, as he does, that the history of the *Argonautic* expedition is a fable or allegory, and that there never were such persons as *Jason*, *Hercules*, or *Chiron* ; would it follow that the history of *Greece* in the later periods was equally fabulous, and that there never was a *Pisistratus*, a *Solon*, or a *Miltiades* ? Supposing that not only the his-

tory of *Romulus* and *Remus* being suckled by a wolf was a fiction, but that there never were any men who bore those names, or did what is ascribed to them; would it follow that there were no kings in *Rome* prior to the *Consuls*, or that there never were such men as *Fabricius*, *Cincinnatus*, or *Scipio Africanus*, who lived before the time of the historians who have recorded their actions?

Admitting, then, the history of *Adam* and of the antediluvians, to be ever so fabulous, it will not follow that the history of *Noah* is fabulous too; and much less that of *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob*, *Moses's* own ancestors, and at no great distance from his own time, and which was of such a nature as not to be easily forgotten.

M. *Dupuis* did not, surely, consider how near *Moses* was to one of those persons whom he supposes to denote the signs of the *zodiac*; for *Levi*, one of them, was only his great-grandfather. His grandfather *Kohath* accompanied his father *Levi* when *Jacob* went to Egypt. Now, for a man to pretend that his own great-grandfather was not a man, but a constellation of stars, would be deemed little less than insanity. After so short an interval, *Moses* must certainly have known whether *Levi*, his great-grandfather, was a man like himself or not. And since he relates the history of his birth, as well as that of all the twelve brothers, and mentions the reasons of the names which their several mothers gave them, in a manner perfectly natural, and agreeing with the manners of that age, there cannot be a reasonable doubt of its being a real history; that *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, were men and not stars, as well as their descendants *Levi*, *Kohath*, *Amram*, and *Moses*, who descended in a right line from them.

It is something singular too, that, in this same allegorical history, we should be made to pass from men to stars, and from stars to men again. For though, according to M. *Dupuis*, the twelve patriarchs were the twelve signs of the *zodiac*, he finds no place in the heavens for their immediate ancestors, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*; and though *Moses* and *Aaron* were real men, *Samson*, who came long after them, was the Phenician *Hercules*, or the sun. And though he does not pretend that *David*, *Solomon*, or the other kings of *Judah* or *Israel*, were not real human beings, he makes the history of the companions of *Daniel* to be an *Assyrian* tale. If *Shadrach*, *Meshech*, and *Abednego*, were fabulous personages, *Daniel* himself could not well have been any other; especially as, proceeding farther, we have more fa-

bulous and allegorical circumstances ; *Jesus* being the *sun*, the same with *Osiris*, *Adonis*, and *Samson*, and the twelve apostles the twelve signs of the *zodiac*, the same with the twelve patriarchs. Now, though the transition from fable to history be natural, to go back from history to fable, especially in a more enlightened age, abounding with writers, is certainly very unnatural.

M. *Dupuis* supposes the institutions of *Moses* to have been his own device, and the *Pentateuch* to have been written by himself. At least I do not recollect that he says any thing to the contrary. Now these books contain both a code of civil law, and a history of the public transactions of his own times ; as of the plagues inflicted on the *Egyptians*, the institution of the Passover in commemoration of their own deliverance from a state of cruel bondage, their passage through the Red Sea, their hearing the delivery of the ten commandments from *Mount Sinai*, &c. &c., of which, if they really happened, all the people must have been witnesses. Now can it be supposed that any people would have received a body of laws, and a religion to which they were exceedingly averse, when they knew there was no truth in the account of the transactions, said to be of their own times, calculated to enforce the observance of them ?

At whatever period of time it be supposed that the books of *Moses*, containing the religious institutions and the civil laws of the *Hebrews*, were forged, a peculiar difficulty will attend it. If it was near the time of *Moses*, it would be in the perfect recollection of living witnesses that they were not written by him, or by his direction, and that the events related in them never happened. And if it was at any distant time, the people must have had some other laws, and a different religion, which they would not have been disposed to change for institutions they had never heard of before, and such as they disliked. Nor could it have been possible to persuade any nation that a history of themselves, (with which, if it was a forgery, they must have been unacquainted,) framed to impose upon them a new religion and new laws, was the work of any respected ancestor or citizen : for if the writings were genuine, they could not but have heard of them before.

A respect for a religion which a nation had only neglected through dislike, and a prepossession in favour of another, might be revived by a series of new events, natural or supernatural ; or new laws might be adopted as *new ones*, if they saw sufficient reason for adopting them ; but the

adoption of a totally new religion, and new laws, *as ancient ones*, practised by their ancestors, could never have taken place with any people.

After a time of great degeneracy, as that of *Manasseh*, persons about the court might be unacquainted with the writings of Moses ; and the perusal of the threatenings against their apostacy contained in them might give great alarm ; but this circumstance could not have produced the effect ascribed to it, or would have been very transient, if no such books had been heard of before ; or if, when they were produced and examined, it could have been made to appear that the contents were different from what they had received before. There would, no doubt, have been persons enow, able and willing to undeceive a court sufficiently willing to be undeceived in such a case as this. As to the mere ignorance of the contents of the books of Moses, how many sincere Christians are there, in *Catholic* and even *Protestant* countries, who have never read their Bibles through ! It was for the greatest part of his life, by his own confession, the case of Dr. Samuel Johnson, though he was even a bigot in religion.

Besides, was not the Temple of *Solomon* then standing, though it had been applied to other purposes ; and was not the structure of it, and the apparatus of instruments, &c. belonging to it, a standing proof of the antiquity of the religion that had been exercised in it ? Were not the orders of priests and Levites then subsisting ? If they had not been heard of before, would they have been adopted at that time, as ancient institutions ?

Some will pretend that the books of Moses might have been forged immediately after the *Babylonish* Captivity. But this was a period of history peculiarly unfavourable for such a purpose. The people had then resided a long time in a distant country, and had married into foreign families, forbidden by the laws of Moses. That they were in a great measure become weaned from their own country, appeared by the small number of those who returned to it, when they were at liberty so to do. Could it, then, have been in the power of *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, or any other person, (supposing they could have had any reasonable motive for making the proposal,) to have compelled them to dismiss their wives, and conform to various disagreeable laws, without being able to produce sufficient evidence of their being obligatory, as those of their ancestors ?

Did not the decree of *Cyrus*, of which there is a copy in

the book of *Ezra*, authorize the *Jews* to return, and rebuild their temple, and resume their former worship, which implied the existence of a former temple, and a mode of worship peculiar to the nation? And this was many years before the time of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, who went to *Judea* only in the reign of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*. They found the *Jews* in the exercise of their religion, but in some disorder, which, with considerable difficulty, they rectified.

It is said by the *Jews*, and is probable in itself, that *Ezra* collected and arranged as many of the books of their Scriptures as were written before his time, though nothing is said of this in the book that bears his name, or that of *Nehemiah*. But there must have been other persons in the country acquainted with ancient writings as well as he, and who would have prevented any disagreeable imposition. Besides, it is evident from his narrative, which has more internal marks of genuineness than most other writings, that when he arrived, the books of *Moses* were well-known, and that he only read them to the people at the *Feast of Tabernacles*, agreeably to the injunction in the law for that purpose.

At this time also there was a schism in the *Jewish* church; many of the *Jews*, and among them the grandson of the *high-priest*, and many others, from a dislike of the rigour of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, joining the *Samaritans*. This people had separated from the *Jews*, having taken offence at their not being allowed to join them in rebuilding the Temple, and to be admitted to the worship of it, on account of their being a mixed people, and not all of *Hebrew* extraction. And the *Jews* and *Samaritans* were ever after at variance, and had the greatest antipathy to each other.

Notwithstanding this, the *Samaritans* had copies of the books of *Moses*, which they certainly would not at that time have received from the *Jews*. But, respecting those books as much as the *Jews* themselves, they built a temple of their own, and conformed to all the institutions prescribed in those books. That the *Samaritan* copy of the books of *Moses* was not then composed by the *Jews*, is evident from several very considerable differences between it and that of the *Jews*, and from its being written in a different character; the *Samaritans* not adopting the new and more elegant character which the *Jews* had learned in *Chaldea*, but retaining the more ancient one, in which it is probable they were originally written. That these books, containing new laws, and a new religion, should have been forged at that time, and imposed upon the *Jews* in one

character, and on their enemies the *Samaritans* with variations in another, is too improbable to be admitted.

If the books of *Moses* were no forgeries, we may take it for granted that none of the other books of the *Old Testament*, historical or prophetical, are so; because the former being received, no sufficient motive can be imagined for forging any of the rest, if the attempt could have been successful; nor would the supposition answer any important purpose to *unbelievers* at this day.

M. *Dupuis* would have made a much more probable *hypothesis*, if he had maintained that the whole of the *Jewish* history was a fable; that as the twelve patriarchs (one of whom was *Moses's* great-grandfather) denoted the twelve signs of the *zodiac*, he also was either a star, or a planet; that the history of the descent into *Egypt*, and that of their escape from it, with their journeyings in the Wilderness, and their settlement in *Palestine*, was a continuation of the same *Arabian* tale, a mere ingenious fiction; that there never was such a nation as that of the *Israelites*, with their kings *David*, *Solomon*, &c.; and that those who now call themselves *Jews* are only the scattered remains of some horde of wandering *Arabs*, who have assumed that name, and pretend to an extraordinary descent. Also, since Jesus was the sun, and his twelve disciples the twelve signs of the *zodiac*, and consequently the evangelical history a mere romance, that *the Acts of the Apostles*, and the whole of the subsequent history of the Christian church is a sequel to it, and that they who call themselves *Christians*, and according to him are, without knowing it, worshippers of the sun, are a set of people, a *colluvies* of all nations, who, like the Gypsies and free-masons, have formed themselves into a body, though of a very heterogeneous kind, but are not able to give any rational account of their origin.

Since, however, it is granted that there is such a people as the *Jews*, and since, according to M. *Dupuis*, they have, by some means or other, been completely deceived with respect to their history, and have been led to adopt a system of political and religious institutions to which they long had the greatest aversion, there must have been a time when the deception took place; and considering that it is a whole nation that has been so deceived, it is the most extraordinary fact in all history, and in reality a greater miracle than any that are recited in the books of *Moses*.

The contriver of this history, or the author of these *Arabian* tales, must have been the boldest impostor that the

world has ever known ; since he has very unnecessarily run the risk of introducing into his story things at which the spirit of any nation would have been sure to revolt, as the account of the behaviour of *Abraham* and *Isaac* with respect to their wives ; the conduct of *Jacob*, in taking an ungenerous advantage of his brother's distress ; the shocking story of two of his sons, *Simeon* and *Levi*, with respect to the *Shechemites* ; the behaviour of *Joseph's* brethren in selling him for a slave ; the story of *Judah* (the ancestor of the most respectable of all the twelve tribes) and his daughter-in-law *Thamar* ; and their miserable servitude in *Egypt*. No other invented story was ever like this, and yet the success of the imposture has been complete.

If the histories of *David* and *Solomon* be parts of this romance, the story of the debauching of the wife of the brave *Uriah*, and the murder of the husband by the former, and the idolatry of the latter, to please his wives, when he was old, were ill adapted to answer the purpose. But, according to M. *Dupuis* and other *unbelievers*, the *Jews* were never like any other men ; so that it is in vain to apply to them the common principles of human nature, as we observe them in other people.

As every thing that is opprobrious must be said of the *Hebrews* and *Jews*, their being *barbarians*, destitute of all knowledge of science and the arts, never fails to make a part of the charge against them by all *unbelievers*. M. *Dupuis* intimates that the *Jews*, though worshippers of the sun, like the *Egyptians* and other ancient nations, had no images, because they were not able to make any. But this charge, though perpetually and confidently urged, is not supported by any facts.

The ancestors of this despised nation, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, appear to have been in the habits of civilized life, as much as any other people of that time. The behaviour of *Abraham* in the purchase of a burying ground for his wife shews much politeness, as well as wealth. *Isaac* and *Jacob* were not inferior to the *Arab Sheiks*. *Joseph*, though sold a slave, rose to be prime minister in *Egypt*, at that time in a very flourishing state ; for, with M. *Dupuis's* leave, I must here consider him as a man, and not a constellation in the *zodiac*, and though unjustly enslaved in that country, the chiefs of the *Israelites* at least might see and learn all that was practised by their masters.

The construction of the Tabernacle in the Wilderness, and much more the building of the Temple of *Solomon*,

shews that this horde of barbarians were not without a knowledge of such arts as were practised in that age. In what manner soever they acquired them, justly or unjustly, they had much cattle, and great wealth, in gold, silver, and precious stones, when they left *Egypt*,* and they were acquainted with the methods of using them.† *Aaron* actually cast a golden calf, and on the twelve different kinds of precious stones were engraved the names of the twelve tribes. *Moses* wrote the books of his law, whether in the exact form of the present *Pentateuch* or not. The Tabernacle, besides being constructed of the most costly materials, and in the most exquisite manner, was furnished with vessels, and other things proper for libations, sacrifices, and other acts of worship. The *cherubim* that were over the ark were probably emblematical figures, with the heads of some or more animals; at least they had wings, which it required some skill to carve.

The *Egyptians* erected more stupendous works, though whether so early as this time is very uncertain. According to *Herodotus*, the building of the first pyramid must have been long after this; but no remains of any of their works imply more *art* and *skill* than appear in the construction of the Tabernacle. And though they made use of *hieroglyphics*, we have no certain knowledge of any *books* composed by them. *Herodotus* makes no mention of any that they had even in his time, nor do any such appear to have been known to any of the *Greeks*, who did not want curiosity to make inquiry about them, and who would probably have been glad to translate, or copy from them.

There can be no doubt, therefore, but that if the *Hebrews* had been disposed to make use of images in their worship, they could have made them as well as the *Egyptians*. *Jeroboam* had calves at *Dan* and *Bethel*; and in that early age men did not require images of exquisite workmanship. According to the accounts of all travellers, the images in the *Hindoo* temples do not discover more ingenuity, or knowledge of any of the arts, than the *Israelites* possessed when they left *Egypt*. Some of their oldest images are little more than large stones in a conical form.

* It is evident from this circumstance that their leaving *Egypt* was at leisure, and with the consent of the *Egyptians* at the time. (*P.*) See Vol. XI. p. 138.

† “ Ils y avoient joui longtemps de la faveur des souverains, et de la protection du gouvernement. L'oppression même que leur multiplication prodigieuse et leurs prospérités leur avoient attirée, ne les avoit point empêchés d'exercer, dans les momens de relâche, le commerce et les arts; puisque Moïse trouva parmi les Hébreux des ouvriers en bois, des fondeurs, des orfèvres, des graveurs en pierres fines.” *Lettres de quelques Juifs*, I. p. 147.

SECTION IV.

Of Christianity.

THE principal object of M. Dupuis's elaborate work, and, no doubt, that of all *unbelievers*, in *Christian* countries, is the overthrow of Christianity; and it is only *this* that they wish to wound through the sides of *Judaism*; thinking that if one part of the system of revelation be overturned, the other part will fall with it. And on this account M. Dupuis represents the connexion of Christianity with Judaism, and the most exceptionable parts of the writings of *Moses*, as of the strongest kind. "The whole of the Christian religion," he says, "is founded upon the allegory of the second chapter of Genesis. The incarnation of Christ was become necessary to repair the mischief that was introduced into the universe by the serpent, which seduced the first man and woman. The existence of Christ, the restorer, cannot be admitted as an historical fact, but on the supposition that the conversation between the serpent and the woman, and the introduction of evil, (which was the consequence of it,) was real and historical."* "If this pretended adventure be an allegory, the mission of Christ must be so too. These two doctrines cannot be separated."†

Now I have shewn that the proper *Mosaic* history, and the *Hebrew* institutions contained in his writings, have no necessary connexion with his account of the creation and fall of man. And if the *Jewish* religion have no necessary connexion with it, much less has Christianity; and in the *New Testament* there is not the least allusion to it; which, if it had been a necessary part of the same scheme, could not have been avoided.

* *Origine*, III. p. 5. (P.) "Toute la religion Chrétienne est appuyée sur l'allégorie du second chapitre de la Genèse. L'incarnation du Christ n'est devenue nécessaire, qu'afin de réparer le mal introduit dans l'univers par le serpent qui séduisit la première femme et le premier homme.—L'existence de Christ réparateur ne peut être admise comme fait historique, qu'autant que la conversation du serpent avec la femme, et l'introduction du mal, qui en fut la suite, sera un fait réel et historique." *Ibid.* This author presently quotes from *Beausobre*, and applies to his purpose a remark by Dr. Thomas Burnet, on the story of the fall. See *Archæologia* (L. ii.), 1692, p. 284; Blount's *Oracles of Reason*, 1693, p. 31.

† *Origine*, III. p. 37. (P.) "L'histoire de la chute prétendue de l'homme, sur laquelle est appuyé tout le système religieux des Chrétiens, ou l'ouvrage de la mission de Christ, est une pure allégorie.—La réparation d'une faute allégorique ne pouvoit être qu'allégorique elle-même." *Ibid.*

M. *Dupuis* represents the account of the miraculous conception of Jesus as a necessary part of the Christian scheme. This history, however, as given in the introductions to the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*, many Christians, in all ages, and especially the *Jewish* Christians, who must be allowed to have been the best judges in the case, never admitted. In my *History of Early Opinions concerning Christ*,* I have given my reasons at large why I think it is not entitled to any credit. But this does not in the least shake my faith in the history of the public life, the death and resurrection of Jesus, written by proper witnesses.

The history of the fallen angels is another circumstance on which M. *Dupuis* lays much stress. "According to the Christians," he says, "there was from the beginning a division among the angels; some remaining faithful to the light, and others taking the part of darkness," &c.† But this supposed history is not found in the Scriptures. It has only been inferred from a wrong interpretation of one passage in the second epistle of *Peter*, and a corresponding one in that of *Jude*,‡ as has been shewn by judicious writers. That there is such a person as *the Devil* is no part of my faith, nor that of many other Christians; nor am I sure that it was the belief of any of the Christian writers. Neither do I believe the doctrine of demoniacal possessions, whether it was believed by the sacred writers or not;§ and yet my unbelief in these articles does not affect my faith in the great facts of which the evangelists were eye and ear witnesses. They might not be competent judges in the one case, though perfectly so with respect to the other.

M. *Dupuis* also loads Christianity with many other doctrines which have been long exploded, as is well-known, by many Christians. He chooses to take no notice of any Christians besides *Roman Catholics*, as if he had never heard of *Protestants*, or *Unitarians*. If we had had no other accounts of the Christian system besides this work of M. *Dupuis*, it would have been taken for granted that all Christians were *Trinitarians*. Jesus, he considers, as the proper object of worship to all Christians;|| whereas the *New Tes-*

* Vols. VI. VII.

† *Origine*, I. p. 226. (P.) "Il y eut, suivant les Chrétiens, une scission entre les anges: les uns restèrent fidèles à la lumière, et les autres prirent le parti des ténèbres." *Ibid*.

‡ See, on 2 *Peter* ii. 4, *Jude* 6, Vol. XIV. pp. 416, 417, 440.

§ See Vol. XV. p. 309, *Note*.

|| *Origine*, I. p. 52. (P.) "Les Crétois avoient chez eux le tombeau de Jupiter, et les Chrétiens montrent pareillement celui de leur Dieu." *Ibid*.

tament represents him in no other light than that of a great prophet, who taught the true worship of God, and announced, as from him, the great doctrine of a resurrection; and a more pious and humble worshipper of God, one more devoted to his will, in living and dying, never appeared in the world.

According to M. *Dupuis*, all Christians hold the doctrine of the eternity of hell torments;* and, contrary to what appears on the very surface of the evangelical history, he says, "the evangelists have made Jesus to act, preach, and announce, the austerities which the Bramins and other devotees of the East still practise. In general," he adds, "this legend is more wonderful than amusing to read. It partakes a little of the austere sect of the Jews, and does not shine with respect to genius."†

But certainly M. *Dupuis* does not shine with respect to fidelity; for so far was Jesus from teaching or practising any austerities, that for using less rigour than the *Pharisees*, or *John the Baptist*, they said of him, (*Matt.* xi. 19,) that he was "a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." In a later age some of the monks, copying the Heathens, practised the austerities to which M. *Dupuis* alludes, but there is no recommendation of them in the *New Testament*.

To load Christianity with tenets and practices which do not belong to it, is nothing new; it proceeds from the usual artifice, or ignorance, of *unbelievers*; but what is, I believe, quite original in M. *Dupuis*, (who, however, is not to be understood as advancing any opinion of his own,) is, that Christianity is derived from *Persia*. "A branch of the *Mythriacs*," he says, "is known by the name of the sect of Christians."‡ "In reality," he says, "Mithra and Christ were born on the same day, in a grotto or stable; Christ and Mithra regenerated the universe by the blood of a lamb, or of an ox; they died at the epocha of the revival of the light, as they were born in the season of darkness. They both had secret initiations, purifications, baptisms, confessions," &c.§

* *Origine (Traité des Mystères)*, II. p. 151. (P.) "—ceux que la religion Chrétienne désigne, sous le nom d'hommes coupables de péchés mortels, et qu'elle condamne à des supplices sans fin—à la damnation éternelle." *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* III. p. 53. (P.) "On le fit agir, prêcher et annoncer les austérités que les Brame et les autres dévots de l'Orient pratiquent encore.—En général sa légende est plus merveilleuse, qu'amusante à lire. Elle se ressent un peu du caractère des sectes austères de la Judée, et ne brille pas sur-tout par l'esprit." *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* (*Traité des Mystères*), II. (P.)

§ *Explication des Planches*, p. 12. (P.) "En effet Mithra et Christ naissoient

In the Persian system he finds both the doctrines and the practices of the Christians. "The consecration of bread," he says, "which is one of the great mysteries in the Christian religion, is also found in the religion of Mithra, with the mystical words which produce it."* "The initiated of Mithra," he says, "admitted the doctrine of a resurrection,"† In treating of the ancient *Mysteries*, he says, "the idea of the Mystagogues, in exaggerating the pretended evils of another life, was the artifice that was chiefly employed by the Christians to draw to their party the common people, and the women; for," he adds, "it was in this class that at first they endeavoured to make proselytes."‡

One would think that a person who wrote in this manner could never have read the *New Testament*, but must have taken his idea of Christianity from the practices of the *Roman Catholics* only. What is there in the *New Testament* of the regeneration of the universe by the blood of a lamb or an ox, of mysteries, initiations, purifications, confessions, or the consecration of bread? The doctrine of the resurrection was believed by the *Jews*§ before any account that we can collect concerning the religion of the *Persians*, which cannot with any certainty be traced higher than the reign of *Darius Hystaspes*; and M. Dupuis's ideas of the views and conduct of the first preachers of Christianity are unsupported by any facts whatever, and make its reception by the powerful and the learned no less than a miracle.

M. Dupuis traces some things peculiar to Christianity to a source even higher than the religion of the *Persians*; for the figures and names of the constellations are older than any thing in their country. Speaking of the constellation Virgo, he says, "This same virgin was represented in the ancient spheres with a young child, to which she gave suck,

le même jour, dans une grotte ou étable; le Christ et Mithra régénéroient l'univers par le sang d'un agneau ou d'un bœuf; ils mouraient à l'époque de la renaissance de la lumière, comme ils étoient nés dans la saison des ténèbres. Tous deux enfin eurent des initiations secrètes, des purifications, des baptêmes, des confessions mêmes," &c. *Explication des Planches*, p. 12.

* *Origine*, III. p. 85. (P.) "Quant à la consécration du pain, qui est dans la religion Chrétienne un des grands mystères, elle se retrouve aussi dans la religion de Mithra avec des paroles mystiques qui l'opèrent." *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* p. 207. (P.) "Les initiés à Mithra admettoient aussi le dogme de la résurrection." *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* II. p. 137. (P.) "Cette idée des Mystagogues, qui consistoit à exagérer les maux prétendus de l'autre vie,—cette ruse fut mise en usage principalement par les Chrétiens, pour attirer dans leur parti le petit peuple et les femmes; car ce fut dans cette classe, qu'ils cherchèrent à faire d'abord des prosélytes." *Ibid.*

§ See Vol. XII. pp. 495—498.

and which they called Jesus, or Christ,* whence arose the fable of the Christians concerning the God of the day, and of the year, which sprung from the chaste loins of the virgin, at midnight, at the rising of the star which the Magi observed."† How deeply learned in antiquity must the founders of the Christian religion have been! Surely they must have looked higher than the conversion of the common people, or of women.

This same child, however, suckled by the constellation *Virgo*, and of course, one of the stars, we find presently advanced to a much higher rank. He is nothing less than the sun. "From the twelve great gods of Egypt," M. Dupuis says, as quoted before, [p. 332,] "the Christians have taken their twelve apostles, the companions of God, the Father of light, whose death and resurrection they celebrate, like that of *Adonis* in Phenicia, and *Osiris* in Egypt.—Christ," he says, "has all the wonderful characters of Mithra, Adonis, Osiris, &c. They all died, descended into hades, and rose again like him. He is the only son of an invisible Father, placed beyond the visible universe, and who alone retains his image."‡ Christ being the sun, the

* That the names of *Jesus*, or *Christ*, should be in any ancient sphere is in the highest degree improbable. The former is only the Greek method of writing *Joshua*, and the latter word is pure Greek, being a translation of *Messiah*, which, in the Hebrew, signifies *anointed*. On this subject I must refer to my *Animadversions* on M. Volney in my *Observations on the Increase of Infidelity*, and my *Letters* to him. [*Supra*, pp. 85, 86, 125.]

M. Dupuis (III. p. 46) quotes a passage in a work of *Abulmazar*, a *Mahometan* astronomer, who lived in the ninth century, in which he says, that the virgin in the *zodiac* held in her arms a child, "which some persons called *Jesus*, and which we, in *Greek*, call *Christ*." ["Une Vierge—assise sur un trône, nourrissant et allaitant un jeune enfant, que quelques-uns nomment *Jesus* et que nous appelons en Grec le *Christ*."] That is, some Christians in his time called this child *Jesus*. But what proof is this that this child was so called by any persons before the Christian æra?

There is also a star which some call *Cor Caroli*. But will it therefore follow, that the name of king Charles of England was in any ancient sphere? And, yet, M. Dupuis (p. 47) triumphs in this argument. "What more," says he, "can be demanded? They ask his *name*, and here are his two names. Can there be any mistake here? This passage is precise, and, joined to other circumstances, is of the greatest force." ["Que demande-t-on davantage? On vouloit qu'il fût nommé. Il l'est, et il l'est sous ces deux noms. Peut-on encore s'y méprendre? Ce passage est précis, et il est de la plus grande force réuni à toutes les autres circonstances."] Indeed it has as much force as any other argument in M. Dupuis's elaborate work. (P.)

† *Origine*, I. p. 164. (P.) "Cette même vierge étoit représentée, dans les anciennes sphères, avec un jeune enfant, qu'elle allaitoit, et qu'on appelloit *Jésus* et *Christ*; et dès-lors, nous aurons le mot de l'énigme de la fable des Chrétiens, sur le Dieu du jour et de l'année, qui naissoit dans les chastes flancs d'une vierge à minuit au lever d'une étoile qu'observaient les Mages." *Ibid.*

‡ *Ibid.* III. p. 118. (P.) "Christ a tous les traits merveilleux de Mithra,

first day of the week, he says, is called the *Lord's-day*, while the others retain the ancient names of the planets to which they were dedicated, as *Monday*, &c.*

M. *Dupuis* even finds this extraordinary doctrine of Christ being the *sun*, in the Gospel of *John*, who says, (i. 9,) that he "enlightened every man that cometh into the world." He might have quoted a similar authority for the apostles being the *sun*, for Christ calls them, (*Matt.* v. 14,) the "light of the world."

Not content with deriving both the son and the mother from the Heathen *mythology*, the Christians, according to M. *Dupuis*, have, from the same source, got the mother of this virgin. "They have given," he says, "to the virgin for a mother, *Anna*, an allegorical name, by which the Romans designated the revolution of the year, which they personified under the name of *Anna Perenna*, at the same epocha of time when the ancient year commenced."† Now that the *Jews* (for of that nation certainly were the writers of the *New Testament*, and all the primitive Christians) should borrow any thing from the *Romans*, whose religion they always regarded with the greatest abhorrence, would be thought extraordinary by scholars of a common class; but in M. *Dupuis*, what can be so?

I shall tire the sensible reader with quoting these most extravagant absurdities, which hardly admit of a serious refutation; but I must farther observe, that the *Apocalypse* furnishes M. *Dupuis* with the largest field for the display of his ingenuity and learning. This is a book in the interpretation of which, he says, both *Bossuet* and Sir Isaac Newton have failed,‡ but the real meaning of which was a discovery of his own, and he takes the pains to unfold the supposed mysteries contained in every chapter of it. And, notwithstanding he says that he advances no opinion of his own, he maintains what no person ever did before, viz. that

d'Adonis, d'Osiris, &c. morts, descendus aux enfers, et ressuscités comme lui. Christ est, comme le soleil, le fils unique du Père invisible, celui qui seul peut voir son Père placé au delà de l'univers visible, et qui seul nous enret race l'image." *Origine*, III. p. 118.

* *Ibid.* p. 55. (P.) "Dans la consécration des sept jours de la semaine aux sept planètes, le jour du soleil, ou *Dies Solis*, s'appelle le jour du Seigneur, ou *Dies Dominica*, tandis que les autres retiennent simplement le nom de leur planète, tels que le Lundi, jour de la Lune, Mardi, jour de Mars, etc." *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* p. 47. (P.) "On donne à cette même vierge pour mère *Anna*, nom allégorique par lequel les Romains désignoient la révolution de l'année, que l'on personnifioit, et que l'on fêtoit sous le nom d'*Anna Perenna*, à l'époque même du temps où l'ancienne année commençoit." *Ibid.*

‡ *Explication des Planches*, p. 14. (P.) "Ce livre a résisté à la sagacité de *Bossuet* et de *Newton*." *Ibid.*

it is "a Phrygian work."* "All the fictions in the book," he says, "are derived from the Oriental Mystagogues."† "The repetition of the same numbers, which has such a striking relation to the divisions of astrology, leaves no room to doubt of the astrological character of this work of oriental mysticism."‡ "It is composed," he says, "from scraps of *Ezekiel* and *Daniel*. The whole appears the fruit of a raised imagination, and which gives itself up to all the extravagancies of religious delirium."§ Enlarging farther on the object of it, he says, "it was a religious curb, by which they endeavoured to preserve for a time the state of morals, which were falling into decay, and by which superstitious fear was awakened in ages of ignorance. Such was the object of the *Apocalypse*, in which the author makes a description of the mischiefs with which the universe was threatened on the approach of the general ruin, occasioned by the disorders of men."|| Here I would ask, if the inventors of this scheme of religion acted wisely in thus attempting to check the progress of vice, can M. *Dupuis* and other *unbelievers* be acting wisely in throwing down this barrier; or have they some object different from the promotion of virtue?

Having traced all the articles above-mentioned to a Heathen source, M. *Dupuis* says, "We might carry our system of resemblances much farther, and shew that the Christians have nothing peculiar to themselves; not only their mysteries, or their theology, but even their religious practices, their ceremonies, and their festivals. This is a work which I leave to others, unless a superabundance of leisure allow me to employ myself in this way, to demonstrate the *nature* of their religion, and its conformity with the most ancient

* *Origine*. III. p. 186. (P.) *Dupuis* entitles his piece, "*Examen d'un Ouvrage Phrygien*, contenant la doctrine Apocalyptique des initiés aux mystères de la lumière et du soleil equinoxial de printemps, sous le symbole de l'Agneau ou d'Aries, premier des douze signes." *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. p. 202. (P.) "Toutes ces fictions se ressemblent assez, et partent à-peu-près des mêmes sources, c'est-à-dire, de la Mystagogie Orientale." *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. p. 221. (P.) "Une répétition des mêmes nombres, aussi suivie, aussi symétrique, et qui a des rapports aussi frappans avec les divisions de l'astrologie, ne nous permet pas de douter du caractère astrologique de cet ouvrage de la mysticité orientale." *Ibid*.

§ *Ibid*. p. 246. (P.) "Tout nous semble être le fruit d'une imagination exaltée, qui se livre à tous les écarts d'un délire religieux." *Ibid*.

|| *Ibid*. p. 203. (P.) "C'étoit un frein religieux, par lequel on cherchoit à contenir pour quelque temps les mœurs, au moment où l'on craignoit une décadence générale; et par lequel on reveilloit la crainte superstitieuse, dans les siècles d'ignorance. Tel fut le but du livre de l'*Apocalypse*, dans lequel l'auteur fait la peinture des maux, dont est menacé l'univers, à la veille d'une ruine générale causée par les desordres des hommes." *Ibid*.

religions ; a demonstration which the present inquiry into the *origin* of the religion does not require.”*

It is to be hoped that our author will find the leisure that may be necessary for this great work. It is certainly of much importance to Christians, who have hitherto known nothing either of the *origin* or of the *nature* of their religion ; having now learned the former, to be instructed by the same hand in the latter ; as it is not probable that any other person is possessed of the same means, or will do it so well. In the mean time, it may be of some use to him to hear a few plain observations on this part of his kind undertaking ; and in this I will endeavour to be serious. But previous to this, besides the general account above-mentioned, we must attend to a few farther particulars concerning the construction of this fabulous history, as M. *Dupuis* considers that of Christ and the apostles to be.

“ The history,” he says, “ which they have imagined for Christ is rather a sorrowful legend than an ingenious poem ;”† adding what I quoted before [p. 346], “ In general, this legend is more wonderful than amusing to read, and does not shine with respect to ingenuity.” Indeed, it is as plain and unadorned a narrative of facts as ever was written ; and I doubt not affords little amusement to M. *Dupuis*, though, by means of it, he has furnished matter of amusement for his readers.

The account, however, having the appearance of a regular history, and abounding with particulars of persons, times, and places, he could not avoid endeavouring to account for this circumstance ; and with respect to it, he says, “ Having made him to be born among the Jews, they subjected him and his mother to Jewish practices. They imagined a circumcision on the eighth day, and at the end of six weeks the mother goes to the Temple to purify herself, like other

* *Origine*, III. p. 150. (P.) “ Nous pourrions suivre encore plus loin le système des rapprochemens et des ressemblances, et faire voir, que les Chrétiens n’ont rien qui soit à eux exclusivement, non-seulement dans leurs mystères, ni dans leur théologie, mais même dans leurs pratiques religieuses, dans leurs cérémonies, et jusques dans leurs fêtes.

“ C’est un ouvrage particulier à faire sur cet objet, et que je laisserai faire à d’autres, à moins qu’une surabondance de loisir ne me permette de m’occuper de cette seconde manière de démontrer la *nature* de leur religion, et sa conformité avec les religions les plus anciennes, démonstration dont la question présente sur l’*origine* de leur religion n’a plus besoin.” *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* p. 53. (P.) “ L’histoire qu’on imagine pour Christ, fut plutôt une triste légende qu’un poème ingénieux.” *Dupuis* adds, “ On chercha moins à y peindre le héros, que l’homme doux, patient, bienfaisant, venu sur la terre pour prêcher par son exemple les vertus, que l’on vouloit inculquer aux initiés à ses mystères.” *Ibid.*

Jewish women. They who fabricated the story have connected the supposed events of it, not only with particular places, as *Judea*, but to a particular epocha, and to known names, as the age of *Augustus* and *Tiberius*, and that of *Pontius Pilate*, whom they have brought upon the scene near a hundred years after his death, when they contrived the romantic story of the god of light, born of a virgin, on the 25th of December, and triumphing over darkness on the 25th of March, at the vernal equinox, in his passage into the lamb.* M. Dupuis has even taken the pains to delineate and explain the exact position of the heavens at the time of the supposed birth of Christ,† with which, as a great curiosity, before unknown to any Christians, I shall present my reader.

“The horoscope of the god of day at the time of his birth in the winter solstice at midnight, on the 25th of December, the day on which the ancient marbles fix the birth of the invincible sun.

“The four quarters of the heavens were then occupied in the East by the virgin and her rising son, as they are represented in the Persian spheres of *Aben Ezra* and *Abul-mazar*, with his names of Christ and of Jesus; in the *nadir*, by the goat *Capricorn*; in the West, by the ram, or the celestial lamb, near to which shines the bull; and lastly, in the *zenith*, by the ass, and the manger of *Cancer*. At the feet of the virgin is seen his bright star called *Janus*, who, eight hours after opened the Roman year, holding the keys, with a bald forehead, as being the prince or the chief of the twelve months. Above the lamb, to the West, appear the three stars of the belt of *Orion*, vulgarly called at this day, *the three kings of the Magi*. Can we desire a more exact resemblance to Christ born in a manger, by the side of these animals, &c. &c.?”‡

* *Origine*, III. pp. 53, 54. (P.) “L’ayant fait naître parmi les Juifs, on l’asservit lui et sa mère aux pratiques juives. On imagina une circoncision le huitième jour, telle que la subissoient tous les enfans. Au bout de six semaine sa mère va au temple pour se purifier, comme toutes les autres femmes juives.

“Ceux qui l’ont fabriquée en ont lié les évènements supposés, non-seulement à un lieu particulier, tel que la *Judée*, mais encore à une époque et à des noms connus, tels que le siècle d’*Auguste* et de *Tibère*, et le nom de *Ponce Pilate*, qu’on a mis sur la scène près de cent ans après sa mort, lorsqu’on imagina l’histoire romanesque du dieu lumière, né au sein d’une vierge le 25 Décembre, et triomphant des ténèbres par sa résurrection le 25 Mars, à l’équinoxe de printemps, dans son passage sous l’agneau.” *Ibid*.

† *Explication des Planches*, p. 13. (P.) “La position du ciel au moment de la naissance du dieu-jour, le 25 Décembre à minuit.” *Ibid*.

‡ *Ibid*. pp. 13, 14. (P.) “L’horoscope du dieu-jour, à l’époque ou il nais-

After so particular a description of our Saviour's horoscope, which will not fail to excite a smile in the intelligent reader, he will excuse me the trouble of transcribing M. *Dupuis's* elaborate explanation of it, as well as his equally elaborate commentary on each of the chapters of the *Apocalypse*, which makes a separate treatise in his work.* M. *Dupuis* should have informed us what astrologer was present at the birth of Jesus, that we might be certified of the exactness of so important an *horoscope*; for the evangelists say nothing even of the season of the year in which he was born; nor do I think that he was born in a stable, or in any of the circumstances assumed by M. *Dupuis*. His death was, no doubt, at the time of the Jewish Passover, which of course was near the vernal *equinox*, though not exactly so; but this is a circumstance on which no Christians ever laid any stress. His triumph over darkness, by which M. *Dupuis* supposes some allusion to the *Persian* mythology, is the arbitrary comment of his own. Christians know nothing of either *light* or *darkness*, in the sense in which he understands them.

As the twelve apostles are mentioned by name, and with several personal circumstances, in the gospel history, M. *Dupuis* could not avoid giving some account of *them*. "The number of the twelve apostles," he says, "is that of the signs of the *zodiac*, and of the secondary *genii*, who presided in the signs. They were the twelve great gods of the Romans. The chief of these twelve *genii*—had the ship and the keys of time, like the chief of the secondary gods of the Romans, or *Janus*, on whom our St. *Peter* was modelled. This *Janus* had his place in the heavens, in the same celestial sign in which we find his young master, that is, in the virgin mother of Christ, who every year opens a new solar revolution, as we may see in *Plutarch*. Thus, the mother, the son, and the twelve apostles, are placed in the heavens,

soit, c'est-à-dire au solstice d'hiver; à minuit du 25 Decembre, jour auquel les marbres antiques fixent la naissance du soleil invincible.

"Les quatre centres du ciel, à cet instant, étoient occupés à l'Orient par la vierge et son fils naissant, tels que le représentent les sphères persiques d'*Aben Ezra* et d'*Abulmazar*, avec son nom de Christ et de Jésus: au nadir, par le bouc du *Capricorne*; à l'Occident par le Bélier, ou Agneau céleste, près duquel brilloit le Taureau; et au *zenith* enfin, par l'âne et la crèche du Cancer.

"Aux pieds de la vierge, on voit une de ses belles étoiles, appelée *Janus*, qui huit jours après ouvroit l'année Romaine, tenant des clefs, ayant le front chauve, et étant le prince ou chef des douze mois. Au-dessus de l'Agneau à l'Occident, paroissent les trois étoiles du baudrier d'*Orion*, appelées encore aujourd'hui vulgairement les trois *Rois Mages*. Peut-on desirer des rapports mieux prononcés avec le Christ naissant dans une crèche, à côté des animaux?" &c. &c. *Ibid*.

* See *Examen de l'Apocalypse*, in *Origine*, III. pp. 201—323.

in the same point of the *zodiac* which opens the revolution. If he had disciples, they are fixed at *seventy-two*, a number still consecrated in the allegory of the sun;—and *seven*, that of the planets, is every where consecrated in the *Christian Mythriac* religion.”*

Having thus allegorized the history of Christ and the apostles, M. Dupuis found it convenient to advance a little farther to the protomartyr *Stephen*. “In the horizon,” he says, “is seen *Stephanos*, or the first *paranatellon*, of which they have made St. *Stephanos*, or *Stephen*, the first person for whom they have made a festival-day after that of the birth of Christ, viz. the 26th of December. He is followed by the eagle of St. John the evangelist, whose festival is the 27th of the same month.”† But the *New Testament* says nothing of any of these festivals, any more than of these constellations, or the eagle of St. John. They were the inventions and additions of a much later period, and by persons who certainly knew little of astronomy. But it suits the purpose of M. Dupuis, and other *unbelievers*, to connect with Christianity every absurd tenet or practice that has passed under that name. Though the corruption be ever so manifest, the system must be made answerable for it.

To vindicate a history so abundantly authenticated as that of the promulgation of Christianity, is like undertaking to vindicate that of the *Romans* in the age of *Augustus*, which was co-incident with it, and not better known, or hitherto deemed, by friends or enemies, less unquestionable. And M. Dupuis is particularly unfortunate in the *time* that he has thought proper to pitch upon for the invention of this history, viz. as we have seen, near a hundred years after the

* *Origine*, III. p. 47. (P.) “Le nombre des apôtres, qui forment le cortège de Christ, pendant tout le temps qu’il remplit sa mission, est absolument celui des signes et des *génies* secondaires, tutélaires des signes, que parcourt le soleil durant sa révolution. Ils sont ce qu’étoient les douze grands dieux chez les Romains.

“Le chef de ces douze génies de la révolution annuelle avoit la barque et les clefs du temps, comme le chef des dieux secondaires chez les Romains, ou *Janus*, sur le quel notre St. Pierre est modelé. Ce *Janus*—avoit son siège dans les cieux, dans le même signe céleste où nous trouvons son jeune maître, c’est-à-dire, dans la vierge mère du Christ, qui ouvroit tous les ans la nouvelle révolution solaire, comme on peut le voir dans *Plutarque*.

“Ainsi, la mère, le fils et le chef des douze, se trouvent placés dans le ciel au point même du zodiaque qui ouvre la révolution. Si on lui donne des disciples, on les fixe à 72, nombre encore consacré dans les allégories du soleil et rapporté par *Josèphe* au système planétaire.—Enfin le nombre 7, qui est celui des planètes, est partout consacré dans la religion *Christiano-Mithriaque*.” *Ibid*.

† *Ibid*. p. 91. (P.) “Dans l’horison même, on voit *Stephanos*, ou le premier *paranatellon*, dont on a fait S. *Stephanos*, ou *Etienne*, premier témoin que l’on fête le lendemain de la naissance de Christ, ou le 26 Décembre. Il est suivi de l’aigle de S. Jean l’évangéliste, que l’on fête le 27 du même mois.” *Ibid*.

death of *Pilate*. For this was in the life-time of *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus* and other persons who were writers, and whom he quotes as real and not allegorical persons; and who, of course, must have known whether it was a fiction or truth; and in that age both *Justin* himself and many others died martyrs to their faith in it. *Justin* was by profession a *Platonic* philosopher, and always wore the habit that was peculiar to it, so that he was as little likely as any man to suffer for a fiction.

M. Dupuis, moreover, necessarily makes the inventors of the evangelical history profoundly learned, especially in astronomy and mythology; and surely such men as these could not have lived, and have continued, in absolute obscurity. They must have been well known to men of letters like themselves, and have left some other traces of their existence. But though *M. Dupuis* can discover their deep erudition, he is not able to find any trace of *themselves*, their names, place of residence, profession, &c., which is not a little extraordinary. It must also have been some surprise to himself to find so much learning and ingenuity among Jews.

How came that most curious work, as he considers it, the *Apocalypse*, written by some most profound philosopher, (but surely not the only person of that age skilled in that kind of learning,) not to have been understood before, and to have passed wholly unnoticed except by Christians, who put a very different construction upon it; considering it as a symbolical representation of future events, and not a concealed description of a mystagogical initiation? Could it be in the power of any person, of whatever ability, so completely to deceive all the world, Christians and Heathens? How came this great secret to be kept by the author and his friends so effectually, that the real meaning of it was not discovered before it was done by *M. Dupuis*, in so very distant a period of time, and under so great disadvantage; so many records of ancient learning having perished? He could not be possessed of so many materials for the investigation as those who were contemporary with the writer, or who lived before the general destruction of books, and other monuments of learning, in the dark ages that followed.

Many persons will hardly believe that *M. Dupuis* can be serious in treating the gospel history as an allegory; since there is all the evidence that is ever required in similar cases, and much stronger than in any other case of the kind,

that the four gospels, and the other books of the *New Testament*, were written by the persons to whom they are usually ascribed, and, consequently, while the transactions recorded in them were recent; so that the persons into whose hands they immediately came were judges of the truth of the accounts. And these books having been by them transmitted to us as genuine and true histories, we have their testimony in addition to that of the writers, to the authenticity of the gospel history.

To say nothing of *Paul*, who, however, was an apostle, five of the original twelve apostles were writers, viz. *Matthew*, *Peter*, *James*, *John*, and *Jude*; and if we judge by the quotations of them in other writers of the time immediately following, there is much more evidence of the writings usually ascribed to them having been really written by them, than there is that the works of *Sallust*, *Cicero*, or *Cæsar*, were written by persons who were known by these names. There is, therefore, less evidence of the real personal existence of these men than there is of that of the apostles.

The books that compose the *New Testament* are quoted by all contemporary and subsequent writers, as the production of that age, and they contain as much evidence of the internal kind as is ever expected in a like case, viz. their containing an account of persons and events of those times, and none later. *Peter* quotes the epistles of *Paul* as well known, and the meaning of which had been perverted; which implies that much attention was given to them, and *Paul* himself was then living; for it is said that they both suffered martyrdom at *Rome* in the reign of *Nero*.

Besides the unanimous testimony of early Christian writers, that the gospels were written before the destruction of Jerusalem, it may be clearly inferred from the *Acts of the Apostles*, which was never doubted to have been written by the author of the Gospel of *Luke*. In the *Acts of the Apostles* we have a very circumstantial account of the travels of the apostle *Paul*, and it ends with his confinement at *Rome*, which must have been A. D. 62; and in the Introduction to it he mentions his *former work*, which was therefore, no doubt, written before that time. In any similar case, such evidence as this, when uncontradicted by any other, is always admitted as satisfactory.

As to *Tacitus*, who gives an account of the persecution of the Christians by *Nero*, and says, "they had their name

from Christ, who was put to death in the reign of Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea,"* *M. Dupuis* says, that he wrote near one hundred and twenty years after the time of Christ, and that he took his account from Christians without any examination of his own; but that this will no more prove the existence of Christ than his making mention of *Osiris* after the *Egyptians*, or the mention of *Brahma* by a French writer at this day after the *Hindoos*, will prove *their* existence.†

This, however, is an acknowledgment, that, if not *Tacitus* himself, the Christians of that early age, and who, by his account, were a *great multitude* in Rome, were persuaded of the real existence of Jesus Christ; and some of them, who had so much at stake, would surely satisfy themselves whether there ever had been such a person.

But *M. Dupuis* gives a very erroneous account of the age of *Tacitus*, concerning which he might very easily have satisfied himself. He was born towards the end of the reign of *Claudius*, or the beginning of that of *Nero*; he was much favoured and promoted to dignities by *Vespasian* and his sons, and he died about *seventy* years after the death of Christ; and, consequently, about only *thirty* years after that of the generality of the apostles; so that whether he made any regular inquiry or not, he could not well avoid hearing some authentic account of a body of men so recent and so numerous. It is plain that he wrote without any doubt on the subject. Let any writer be produced so near to the supposed time of *Osiris*, or *Brahma*, who shall speak of them as *Tacitus* does of Christ, and *M. Dupuis*, I am confident, would not hesitate to allow that there really were such men.

M. Dupuis, however, when he wrote this, must have forgotten that he has laid the scene of the invention of the fable concerning Christ near a hundred years after the death of *Pontius Pilate*; consequently, there could not have been any Christians at all in the reign of *Nero*, or in his own life-

* *Annales*, L. xv. S. xlv. See Vol. VIII. p. 80.

† *Origine*, III. p. 150. (P.) "Quant à *Tacite*, lequel près de cent vingt ans après la mort de Christ nous parle du chef de la secte orientale des Chrétiens.—Il a dit ce qu'on disoit à Rome, d'après le témoignage des Chrétiens, et rien de plus.—*Tacite* par-là ne prouve pas plus l'existence historique de Christ, qu'il n'eût prouvé celle d'*Osiris*.—Il est arrivé à *Tacite*, à-peu-près ce qui arriveroit à un historien Français, qui par occasion auroit à parler d'une secte Indienne.—S'il nous disoit qu'ils s'appellent *Bramines*, du nom d'un certain *Brama*, qui a, dit-on, vécu dans l'Inde. Nous garantirait-il pour cela l'existence de *Brama*?" *Ibid.*

time. Into such absurdities and contradictions will strong prepossessions betray men.

I do not find that M. *Dupuis* gives any account of the mention of Christ as a real person in the *Letters of Pliny*,* or the History of *Suetonius*,† who wrote not long after the time of *Nero*. From these writers it appears that the Christians were then numerous in all parts of the Roman empire, which comprehended *Judea* as well as *Spain*,‡ so that intelligence was easily communicated from one extremity of this vast empire to the other. It was a highly civilized age, and abounded more with writers than any other period of antiquity before or after it; and at this time *Judea*, on account of its rebellion, was a very interesting scene, the country being reduced from a state of great population and opulence to utter desolation, such as there is no example of in any other history. The Christians being all this time exposed to persecution, the facts on which their religion was founded could not fail to interest both its friends and its enemies in the highest degree; so that they could not escape a thorough investigation. That an imposition, such as M. *Dupuis* supposes Christianity to have been, should succeed in such an age as this, and in such circumstances as these, must have been perfectly miraculous; and I do not imagine that M. *Dupuis* would be a willing advocate for miracles.

Josephus makes no mention of Jesus,§ or of Christians, though he was contemporary with the writers above-mentioned, probably because he did not choose to say any thing in their favour, and he had nothing to say against them. But he mentions *John the Baptist*, and the apostle *James*, with much respect; and if they were real human beings, and not constellations, their relation to Jesus will prove his existence and history.

If the history of *Jesus* and the *twelve apostles* be an allegory, that of *Paul* and the *Acts of the Apostles*, which is a continuation of the Gospels, must be allegorical also; and so must the next period of ecclesiastical history, which is connected with it, and yet M. *Dupuis* quotes *Justin Martyr*, as well as other Christian writers of that age, as out of the region of allegory, and within that of real existence. He would have written much more plausibly, if he had main-

* *Ep.* xcvi. L. x. See Vol. IV. p. 485, *Note*; Vol. VIII. pp. 106, 107.

† *Nero*, Sect. xvi.

‡ See the "Inscription found in Spain," Vol. VIII. p. 81.

§ This statement is much disputed. See Vol. IV. p. 488.

tained that, if there ever were such persons as *Justin Martyr*, *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, or *Eusebius*, &c., some persons in the dark ages composed the writings which are ascribed to them for their amusement, and imposed them on the world as the genuine productions of an early age; that the history of the conversion of *Constantine*, is as much a fable as that of his baptism by pope *Silvester*,* and his donations to the Church of *Rome*;† or that the Christian name was unknown till about the time of the *Reformation* by *Luther*. All these things are so connected, that it is impossible to separate them. If the history of the *Reformation* by *Luther* be a real history, so must that of the Christian church in the age preceding it, and till the time of the apostles, and that of Christ himself.

I shall conclude this article with what I observed on the subject, immediately after I first heard of it, in my *Letters to the Philosophers and Politicians of France*: “Serious as the subject is, it is not possible to forbear smiling at such palpable ignorance. I shall expect that the same writers will soon attempt to allegorize the history of Julius Cæsar, and maintain that no such person ever existed; for there is not a hundredth part of the evidence for the existence of Julius Cæsar that there is for that of Jesus Christ. Hereafter the history of France itself may be allegorized, and the very names of *Lewis*, *Dumouriez*, and *Pethion*, may be derived from ancient languages, and the present war of your Republic against the despots of Europe be said to mean nothing more than the war of the elements of nature.

“If I had not seen so much of the power of prejudice, I should wonder that so many men of unquestionable good sense among you, and even able writers, should have given so little attention as they have done to *natural probability*, in judging concerning an historical subject.”‡

* See the more probable account of *Constantine's* baptism, from *Eusebius*, Vol. VIII. pp. 319, 320.

† See a reference to this pretended grant, and the retort of *Jerome Donato*, Vol. IX. pp. 124, 125.

‡ *Letter* iv. 1793. See Vol. VIII. pp. 515, 516.

OF THE
ALLEGORIZING TALENTS
OF M. BOULLANGER.*

M. *Dupuis* was not the first to turn the Scripture history into allegory. In this he has only followed the example of M. *Boullanger*; and as a specimen of the great learning and ability of the latter in this field, I shall, by way of *Appendix* to these Remarks on the work of M. *Dupuis*, give a pretty large analysis of his *Dissertation on St. Peter*, contained in the fourth volume of his works.† And the reader must not be surprised if, in explaining the history of this apostle, he goes farther back into antiquity than might naturally be expected.

An old *Phrygian* tradition, preserved in *Suidas*, says, that before the time of *Deucalion*, the first king of *Phrygia* called *Nannacus*, *Annacus*, or *Cannacus*, was informed by an oracle, that after his death all things would perish, an event which he lamented with many tears; whence came the proverb *to weep like Annacus*.‡ This *Annacus* (for of the three names it was most convenient for M. *Boullanger* to make choice of this, and, rejecting the Greek termination, to reduce it to *Annac*,) he makes to be the same with Moses's *Enoch*, who died a year before the flood; and because *Enoch* lived 365 years, he makes him to be the same with the sun, who completes his annual revolution in so many days; and because he immediately renews his course again, and therefore never properly dies, *Enoch*, he says, is said to have been translated without dying.§

Passing from the *Asiatic* to the *Roman* history, which began with this of Asia, he observes, that since *Æneas*

* See *supra*, pp. 9, 10, 63, where, as in *Voltaire's* works, the name is spelt *Boullanger*.

† *Œuvres de Boullanger*, 8 tomes, 1778. (P.) "Dissertation sur Saint Pierre." *Œuvres de Boullanger*, Paris, 1792, VI. pp. 158—185.

‡ *Modern Universal History*, V. p. 513. (P.)

§ "Le nom d'*Hénoch* a sans doute été un des anciens titres du soleil." *Boullanger* adds, that they gave "à ce patriarche astronome une vie toute astronomique de 365 ans, parce que soleil circule en 365 jours. Ils prétendent qu' ensuite il a été enlevé du milieu des hommes, et qu'il ne finit sa course de 365 jours que pour en recommencer une autre." *Œuvres*, VI. pp. 162, 163. *Boullanger* further says, "*Hénoch* n'est dans la *Génèse* qu'un patriarche qui a vécu 365 ans, c'est que les Hébreux qui se sont trompés sur un emblème solaire n'en ont pu faire qu'un homme, leur loi leur ayant défendu de faire des dieux." *Ibid.* p. 170.

(whose name he reduces to *Æneach*) was remarkable for his weeping as well as his piety, he also may be the same with *Annac*.* And though *Anchyses* the father was not translated, yet (which, he says, is perhaps the same fable transposed) his wife *Creusa* was carried away by *Venus* while *Troy* was in flames.†

From the same origin M. *Boullanger* derives the name of *Noah*, “another historical and perfect *Enoch*, or true *Annac* ;”‡ and by a farther curious management of etymologies, the particulars of which I omit, he makes him the same person with *Hermes* or *Mercury*,§ the great founder of religion and laws.

Now because the apostle Peter wept as *Annacus* did, he also must be the same person with him. Like *Noah* and *Enoch*, Peter foretold the end of the world ; and, like *Hermes*, he was “the fabricator of the thunders of religion.”|| He is therefore the same with them ; and because keys are given to *Peter*, and he repented at the crowing of a cock, he is no other than the Roman god *Janus*, who is represented with keys in his hand, and a cock at his feet.¶ There is another circumstance of resemblance between them, in that the name of *Janus* is derived from *janua*, a gate, and the history of Peter, as M. *Boullanger* observes, abounds with reference to gates or doors. The gates of hell were not to prevail against him. He was near the door or gate, when he denied his master, and at the gate of the Temple when he and John restored the lame man. When he was in prison the gates were miraculously opened to let him out. When he found himself at liberty, he went and knocked at the door of a house; which a servant opened to him. When he was at the gates of *Rome* (for M. *Boullanger* makes no distinction between genuine history and fabulous

* “*Ænéach* héros aussi pleureur que religieux.—Nous dérivons le nom de notre prince de *Annac*, de *Anach*, soupirer, pleurer, et c'est-là sa vraie racine.” *Œuvres*, VI. p. 162.

† “Les Romains ne prétendent pas non plus que leur *vieil Anchyse* ait été ainsi enlevé ; mais, ce qui n'est peut-être que la même fable transposée, ils croyent que *Créüse* sa femme et la fille de notre dernier et malheureux roi *Priam*, a été enlevée par *Vénus* lors de l'embarquement de *Troye*.” *Ibid.* pp. 163, 164.

‡ “Un *Hénoch* historique et complet, c'est-à-dire, un véritable *Annac*.” *Ibid.* p. 164.

§ “Ces Phrygiens avoient reconnu l'*Hénoch* Hébreu dans l'*Hermes* Egyptien.” *Ibid.* p. 166.

|| “*Pierre* a pleuré comme *Annac* ; il a prédit la fin du monde comme *Hénoch* et *Noach* ; et comme *Hermès*, il est le fabricant des foudres de la religion.” *Ibid.* p. 166.

¶ “Remarquant les deux clefs et même le coq, attributs inséparables de notre apôtre. ‘C'est *Janus*,’ me répondirent-ils, ‘c'est *Janus*.’—Il est le possesseur des clefs parce qu'il ouvre et qu'il ferme à son gré le ciel et la terre.” *Ibid.* p. 167.

legends) Jesus met him and made him promise to submit to crucifixion ; and to complete the allusion to gates, he was crucified on the *Janiculum*.*

M. *Boullanger* has still more to say on the subject of *Janus*, and of *gates*. It is the prerogative of this god to open the day, and to have all prayers begin with his name. He also delivered the Romans from the *Sabines* by a miracle at the *Viminal* gate.† “The difference between these legends,” he says, “arises from the difference of languages, which are more or less favourable to them.”‡ “Our modern *Janus*,” (meaning *Peter*), he adds, “was the son of *Johanan*, in Greek *Joannes*, and *Jean* in our language,” (*Bar-Jonas*) “which signifies *benevolent, merciful, and one who grants pardons*; and it is therefore the primitive root of the Latin *Janus*, whom the Salian priests called *Jane, Janes*, and sometimes *Jon*.”§

Peter, he farther says, is sometimes called *Cephas*, and this he derives either from a Hebrew word, which signifies to *deliver*, set at *liberty*, or from another which signifies to *bind* or *enchain*; || and the power of *binding and loosing* is given to this apostle. But nothing is better known than that *Cephas* has precisely the same meaning in *Hebrew* that *Peter* has in *Greek*, so that they are perfectly synonymous, like *Messiah* and *Christ*.

“This turn for allegory,” he says, “which makes a sort

* “Lors qu’il est question de *Pierre* dans l’écriture et dans la tradition, il y est presque toujours aussi question de *porte*.—Le portes des l’enfer ne prévaudront jamais contre sa puissance. C’est à la *porte* d’un vestibule qu’il renonce le bon Maître qui l’a comblé de promesses et qui lui pardonne sur le champ. C’est à la belle *porte* du temple qu’avec *Jean* son collègue il guérit un boiteux.

“Lors qu’Hérode le fait-mettre en prison, la *porte de fer* s’ouvre d’elle-même, *Pierre* se sauve chez *Jean* et frappe à sa *porte*. Une servante accourt, entend sa voix, et le laisse frapper à la *porte*, pour apprendre à la compagnie que *Pierre* est à la *porte*.

“Quand les *portes* des prisons de Rome lui sont encore ouvertes, *Pierre* se sauve de même ; mais arrivé à la *porte* de la ville, Jésus lui apparait, l’arrête, et l’engage à se faire crucifier. *Pierre* y consent ; il retourne, il est pris et crucifié la tête en bas ; et pour que tout soit exact dans sa légende, la tradition rapporte que c’est sur le *Janicule* qu’il a consommé son sacrifice.” *Œuvres*, VI. pp. 182, 183.

† “Et c’est par *Janus*, que nous ouvrons la journée en invoquant les dieux, et son nom se trouve en tête dans toutes nos prières. Il est notre médiateur et notre génie tutélaire, ainsi qu’il nous l’a fait voir quand il nous a délivrés des Sabins par le miracle signalé de la *Porte Viminale*.” *Ibid.* p. 168.

‡ “Les différences que j’ai remarquées entre quelques anecdotes de ces légendes ne me parurent plus provenir que de la différence même des langues qui s’étoient plus ou moins prêtées à favoriser les prétensions des peuples.” *Ibid.* p. 169.

§ “Notre *Janus* moderne étoit, dit-on, le fils de *Johanan*, en Grec *Joannes* et *Jean* dans notre langue. Ce nom signifie *bienfaisant, miséricordieux* et celui qui *pardonne*. On peut le regarder comme la racine primitive du *Janus* Latin que les prêtres Saliens nommoient *Jane, Janes*, et d’autres *Jon*.” *Ibid.* p. 172.

|| “La consonance se retrouvoit dans *Khéphas, délivrer, mettre en liberté*, et dans *Céphath lier et enchaîner*.” *Ibid.* p. 174.

of riddle of the history, “we find in the profession of *Peter*, and in the town to which he belonged. He was a *fisherman*,—and of *Bethsaida*, which signifies *the house of fishing*. It was situated on the lake of *Genesareth*, not far from *Gath-Epher*, the ancient abode of the prophet *Jonas*.”* “Nothing,” he says, “can equal *Cabalistic* sagacity. It overlooks nothing. In consequence of this the ship of *Peter* is found in the medals of *Janus*, the ark of *Noah*, and the ship of *Jonas*; and all the three were exposed to great danger on the sea.”†

“If we attend,” he says, “to the sound of the word *Peter*, which is the same with *Petra*, a *rock*, it may be derived from a Phenician word which signifies *to open*,”‡ as *Peter* does the gate of heaven; and “from the same word,” he says, “we have another mythological being, viz. *Baal Peor*, worshipped by the Moabites and Midianites; and this is the same with the ancient *Janus* of Phenicia.”§ The Israelites who began their journey through the Wilderness with the worship of the golden calf, naturally ended it with that of *Baal Peor*; being then at the *opening*, or *entrance*, of the land of Canaan; and there *Moses*, who was not to enter that country, died.|| “This piece of history” is worthy of the *Hebrew* genius, and so the whole of this part of the history appears to me to be nothing but an allegory, in which places are adjusted to names, and names to places, or where facts are sacrificed to fancy, as in the rest of their annals. If this *Moses*, whose sepulchre could never be found, whom the Rabbins say was translated like *Enoch*,

* “Ce goût particulier pour les allusions, qui fait de l’histoire une espèce de logogriphe, se rencontre jusques dans la profession et la demeure de *Pierre*. Il étoit *pêcheur*, dit S. Matthieu, et de la ville de *Bethsaïde*, dit S. Jean; ce nom de ville veut dire *maison de la pêche*. Elle étoit située sur le lac de *Génézaïreth*, non loin de *Geth-Epher*, ancienne patrie de *Jonas*.” *Œuvres*, VI. p. 174.

† “Rien n’égale la sagacité cabalistique, elle ne néglige rien. En conséquence de cette exactitude la barque de *Pierre* ne pourroit-elle pas être aussi le *vaisseau* des médailles de *Janus*, l’*Arche* de *Noé*, et le *navire* de *Jonas*? Tous ces gens—ont couru de grands risques sur mer.” *Ibid.* p. 174.

‡ “Le mot de *Pierre* n’est, comme l’on sçait, que la traduction Française du *Petra* des Latins, du *Πετρος* des Grecs, et du *Céphas* des Orientaux, et il signifie communément ce que nous entendons par une *Pierre*, un *caillou*, un *rocher*. Mais si, quant à son, nous le considérons comme un mot Hébreu ou Phénicien, il signifie ouvrir.” *Ibid.* pp. 175, 176.

§ “De ce même mot oriental étoit sorti le nom d’autre être mythologique.—C’est celui de l’idole *Péor* adorée par les Moabites et les Madianites.—C’est un *Janus* antique de la Phénicie.” *Ibid.* pp. 179, 180.

|| “Si dès le commencement ils se sont fait un *veau d’or*—sur la fin de leur long pèlerinage—ils ont eu recours à une nouvelle divinité—c’étoit pour en obtenir un heureux passage, pour qu’elle leur *ouvrit* enfin un pays qui leur avoit été si longtemps fermé.—C’est de plus auprès du temple de *Péor* que Moïse qui ne devoit point entrer en Chanaan, mourut et fut enseveli.” *Ibid.* pp. 180, 181.

and whom *Peter* saw on Mount Tabor, together with *Elias*, (another ape of *Enoch*,) was not the same with the god *Peor*, the supposition is not, however, improbable.*

Thus, by the dexterous management of etymologies, M. *Boullanger* has shewn that old *Annacus* of Phrygia, *Æneas* of Troy, *Hermes* of Egypt, and *Janus* at Rome, in profane history; and *Enoch*, *Noah*, *Baal Peor*, *Elijah*, *Jonah*, and probably *Moses* too, in sacred history, were the same person with the apostle *Peter*, and that they all represented the sun. With the same plausibility he might have added to them, *Pharoah* king of Egypt, *Sennacherib* of Assyria, *Nebuchadnezzar* of Babylon, *Cyrus* of Persia, and *Alexander the Great*. For, at some time or other they had probably all of them *wept*, entered houses or cities by *doors* or *gates*, and in other characteristic circumstances mentioned by this writer have resembled the prince of apostles. And their wives might have been the same with the wife of *Peter*, and she no other than the *moon*: since she would be as well qualified to shine in that orb, as her husband in that of the sun. Moreover, since as M. *Boullanger* says, "Cabalistic sagacity overlooks nothing," even *Peter's* wife's mother may find a place in this curious allegory. Much has been said of the credulity of Christians, but what is it compared to that of many *unbelievers*? But let us hear M. *Boullanger's* general observations on this subject.

"Such," says he, "is the conclusion of this history, fabulous indeed, but of the greatest antiquity. It has discovered to us things which we knew not before.—We were ignorant, for example, that when mankind changed Paganism for Christianity, the gods themselves were not the last to change; and that many of them quitted the poetical heaven, to enter paradise. It was, no doubt, well for them to do so, but better for us to learn it now, after being ignorant of it so many ages. It remains to be seen whether they are to continue in their places long.

"We are now in the habit of chasing away these objects of popular credulity.—Hitherto we have directed our views to little things only;—whereas we ought to begin the attack with the chiefs of these beatified idols, since the rout of an

* "Ce tour historique est digne du génie Hébreu; aussi toute cette histoire ne me paroît-elle qu'une allégorie où les lieux sont ajustés aux noms, et les noms aux lieux, et où les faits sont toujours sacrifiés à l'illusion comme dans tout le reste de ces annales. Si ce Moïse dont on n'a jamais trouvé la sépulture, et que les Rabbinus disent enlevé comme *Hénoch* et que *Pierre* a vu en effet sur le Thabor avec *Elie* (autre singe d'*Hénoch*) n'étoit lui-même que ce dieu *Péor*, cela seroit sans doute assez plaisant, et n'est pas sans vraisemblance." *Œuvres*, VI p. 181.

army commonly follows the capture of the general. I have now taken one of them, and, gentlemen theologians, I deliver him up to you. *Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered*; for know you not that prophecies must be accomplished?

“When I shall have analyzed in this manner a score of ancient and modern legends, we may perhaps arrive at the knowledge of the true system of sacred and profane mythology.—The specimen I have here exhibited is of sufficient extent, and sufficiently diversified, to enable us to draw from it a general lesson, and a *principle*, which the others can only confirm.”*

If any person, a competent judge of the subject, can peruse this miserable rhapsody, delivered in this confident manner, without a smile of indignation, or contempt, he has more command of himself than I can pretend to. In opposition to it, I will venture to say that there is hardly any history whatever that has more marks of natural character, and of probability in the events, than that of *Peter*, as it may be collected from the *Evangelists*, with the *Acts of the Apostles* and his own writings; and with respect to external evidence, his existence is better authenticated than that of *M. Boullanger* himself, now that he is dead. It is remarkable, however, that though he makes a mere allegory of the history of *Peter*, he appears to have entertained no doubt of the literal truth of that of *Paul*, whom he supposes to have been the real founder of Christianity.† He might

* “Telle est le digne complément et la fin de cette histoire: histoire fabuleuse à la vérité, mais elle surpasse en antiquité tout ce qu’on pouvoit en attendre.—Elle nous a découvert des choses que nous ne scavions pas.—Nous ignorions, par exemple, que lorsque les hommes ont quitté le Paganisme pour la religion Chrétienne, les dieux n’ont pas été les derniers à se convertir aussi, et que plusieurs d’entr’eux ont quitté le ciel poétique pour entrer dans le paradis. C’est fort bien fait à eux, sans doute; mais c’est encore mieux fait à nous d’en être instruits aujourd’hui, après l’avoir ignoré pendant tant de siècles. Reste à savoir s’ils y resteront longtems.

“On est déjà dans le goût de donner la chasse à ces anciens objets de la crédulité des peuples.—Il est vrai qu’ils ne se sont encore adressés qu’aux plus petits et aux foibles—il conviendrait—de commencer par attaquer les premières et les chefs de ces idoles béatifiées. La déroute d’une armée est ordinairement la prise du général. En voici un que je viens de prendre; je vous le livre, messieurs les théologiens: *frappez le pasteur, et les brebis seront dispersées*; car vous n’ignorez pas qu’il faut que les prédictions s’accomplissent.

“Lorsque l’on aura présenté et analysé de la sorte une vingtaine de légendes tant anciennes que modernes, peut-être arrivera-t-on à la connoissance du vrai système de la mythologie, sacrée et profane.—Celle-ci est assez étendue et diversifiée, pour que nous puissions en tirer une leçon générale et un principe que les autres ne pourront que confirmer.” *Ibid.* VI. pp. 183—185.

† “Du système religieux des Chrétiens S. Paul fut évidemment le véritable architecte.” *Ibid.* (*Epit. Ded.*) p. 2.

with as much reason maintain that the history of *Pompey* was a fable, while that of *Julius Cæsar* was real.

Absurd in the extreme as is this specimen of the writings of M. *Boullanger*, one of the great champions of modern infidelity, I have found nothing better in any of them. They abound in the most impudent and unfounded assertions with respect to fact, and what is most obviously futile with respect to reasoning. But confident assertion goes very far with those who are ignorant of a subject, and especially if they be previously disposed in favour of what is plausibly recommended to them ;* and that this is the case with the generality of those who abandon Christianity cannot be denied.†

* "They cannot say that they are such mighty lovers of truth, who care for knowing no more of it than what is pleasing to them. And it may probably happen that many unbelievers deal after this manner with religion, neglecting to understand what might convince them, out of a secret averseness they have of searching into such truths as they cannot discover without extremely disquieting themselves. —The incredulous, therefore, ought to look to it, and not fear to hazard their repose in the search of disquieting truths. They ought to be aware of that ill-regulated self-love which flatters our present passions, and avoids every thing that may mix some bitterness with the sweetness we taste in the enjoyment of them.

"Did we see unbelievers use much application in the search of truth, without omitting any thing that was necessary for their thorough information, and yet not quit their infidelity, we should, perhaps, be tempted to believe that they were in the right, seeing they did not conclude but after a long and requisite discussion. But we see not one of them so disposed, and they are all contented with a very superficial knowledge of religion, without endeavouring to penetrate into the proofs of it; which gives us occasion to confirm ourselves in the belief of the truth, and to be persuaded that their infidelity proceeds from their neglect of the due instruction." *Le Clerc* "Of the Causes of Incredulity," 1697, pp. 91—98.

† For "The Laws and Institutions of Moses" annexed to these *Remarks*, in 1799, see Vol IX. pp. 33—40. "An Address to the Jews," which followed, is reserved for another part of this Edition. See *supra*, p. 133, *Note* ||.



THE
DOCTRINES
OF
HEATHEN PHILOSOPHY,
COMPARED WITH THOSE OF
REVELATION.



[Northumberland, 1804.]

TO THE

REVEREND JOSEPH BERINGTON,*

A Catholic Priest in England,

AND TO THE

RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM WHITE,

A Bishop of the Episcopalian Church in the United States.

GENTLEMEN,

YOU will, I doubt not, be surprised at my dedication of any work of mine to you, differing so much as we do in our sentiments concerning Christianity. But, entertaining the highest respect for your characters, as men and as Christians, I do it *because* we differ; to shew, with respect to a subject in which we are equally interested, as in that of this work, that I regard all that bear the Christian name, how widely distant soever their different churches and creeds may be, as friends and brethren, and therefore entitled, by the express direction of our common Saviour, to particular respect and attention as such.

Though few persons have written more than myself to controvert the established principles of each of your churches, I consider the articles in which we all agree as of infinitely more moment than those with respect to which we differ. We all believe in the being, the perfections, the universal providence, and the righteous moral government of God, as the maker and sovereign disposer of all things. Whatever we may think of the person of Christ, we all believe that his doctrine is divine, and his precepts obligatory upon all. We all believe in his miracles, his death, his resurrection, and his ascension, as related in the books of the *New Testament*. We also all believe that he will come again, to raise all the dead, to judge the world, and to give to every man according to his works; and these are all the articles of faith that can have any considerable influence on the lives and conduct of men. Believing this, our gratitude

* See Vol. IV. pp. 122, (*Note*), 135.

for the communication of knowledge of such infinite importance must be common to us all, and such as should lead to a cheerful obedience to all the commands of God.

I know that the creeds of both your established churches doom me, and all that are out of their pale, as discarding some particular articles of your faith, to *perish everlastingly*, notwithstanding every thing that we may believe or do. But I know that the candid and liberal of all persuasions are provided with some salvo for the conscientious heretic. But whatever may be your opinion with respect to me, which I know will be as favourable as you can make it, I have no doubt but, if I ever do get to heaven, I shall meet with both of you there. In that state our minds will be so much enlightened, that the bigotry which has contributed so much to the miseries of this life, but which has, at the same time, been a valuable exercise of Christian candour, will no longer exist. With respect to myself, the time in which every thing of this kind will be cleared up, and no doubt to universal satisfaction, cannot be very distant; and the difference between my opinion, that it will be after an interval of rest in the grave, and yours, that it will take place with respect to each individual immediately after his death, cannot be thought of much moment by those who believe they shall live for ever after it.

With the highest esteem for your personal characters, though you are probably unknown to each other,

I am, Gentlemen,

Your brother in the faith and hope of the Gospel,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, 1804.



P R E F A C E.

WHEN I wrote the Pamphlet entitled *Socrates and Jesus Compared*,* which I was led to do from the perusal of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, in order to form a more distinct idea than I then retained of the subjects and the manner of the teaching of *Socrates*, and from seeing his character in a different light from that in which it had been usually represented, I had no thoughts of doing any thing more in the same way. But my friends in general approving of the pamphlet, and seeing in the same light with myself the great superiority which it exhibited of the character and teaching of *Jesus* to that of this most moral, and most celebrated, of all the Grecian *philosophers*, I was urged to give a similar view of all the Grecian *moralists*, comparing their principles with those of revelation in general.

At first this appeared to me too great an undertaking at my age, and with increasing infirmities. But finding that my library, notwithstanding the destruction of a great part of it at the Riots in *Birmingham*, [1791,] was so far restored as to contain almost every book that I wanted for the purpose, having a predilection for the work, and abundant leisure in my present retired situation, I reperused the writings of all the *Grecian moralists* that have come to us, making all the extracts that I thought necessary, and then composed the different parts of the work with which I now present the reader. It was, however, not done in the order in which they are now arranged, but as they appeared to me of the most importance, giving directions to my son, that if I died before the work was completed, he would publish what I had finished; having taken the precaution to transcribe, and prepare for the press, each of the separate parts before I undertook any other. In this manner, with much more ease, and, I will add, more to my satisfaction, than I expected, I completed my design.

My labour was the shorter, as I had nothing to do with

* Published separately, 1803. See *infra*.

the *logic*, the *metaphysics*, or the *physics*, of the writers, all equally trifling and absurd, but only with such passages in their writings as related to the being, the attributes, and the providence of God ; their sentiments concerning the human soul, and especially its destination after death ; and their general principles of morals : for with these subjects only could they be brought into comparison with the doctrines of the Scriptures. Also, my comparison extended no farther than till Christianity became the religion of the *Roman Emperors* ; for after this, the tenets of the philosophers and those of the Christians were strangely mixed, so that it might be said they borrowed from each other. I have therefore confined myself to the period in which they were entirely separate. For though after the promulgation of Christianity the Heathen philosophers had sufficient opportunity of acquainting themselves with its principles, they appear to have been entirely ignorant of them, or to have given little attention to them. This appears to me to have been the case with *Marcus Antoninus*, and others who lived long enough after the time of Christ. If they had any knowledge of Christian principles, their bias was rather against, than in favour of them.

There are several subdivisions of the *Grecian philosophers* which I have not noticed, but they were such as made only some small variation in some of the general systems of which I have given a particular account. The most considerable of them were the *Sceptics* and the *Academics* ; but they advanced nothing new, and only doubted and disputed in different ways about the positions of others. For a more particular account of all the Grecian philosophers than it was to my purpose to give, I refer the reader to the excellent *History of Philosophy* by Dr. Enfield, most judiciously compiled from the elaborate work of *Brucker*. As the sentiments of the Grecian philosophers have been represented very differently, by writers who had different views in characterizing them, I thought it necessary to give numerous extracts from their own works ; so that the reader may be confident that I have not made any mistake of importance in my account of them.

I once thought of adding another part, on the sentiments of *Cicero* ; for though he was the founder of no sect, he was well acquainted with the principles of them all, and, no doubt, made his selection of those which he most approved. But besides that there is nothing of his own in any thing he

has advanced on the several subjects, it is not easy to ascertain what his real sentiments were. His preference may in general be pretty well distinguished among the different speakers in his dialogues; but it was too great an object with him to embellish whatever he undertook to defend; so that there is often more of the orator than of the philosopher, even in his philosophical works.

I can by no means persuade myself to think so highly of the religious sentiments of *Cicero*, and of their having been the real principles of his conduct, as Dr. Middleton does. He gives him every thing that is most essential in Christianity, or what was by himself thought to be so; and among the rest, a belief in the immortality of the soul, and its separate existence in a state of happiness or misery after death; whereas he expressly says, there could hardly be found a foolish old woman who feared what had formerly been believed of the dreadful things in the shades below.* Yet on this subject, among others, *Middleton* says, that Cicero “has largely and clearly declared his mind in many parts of his writings.”† Any person, however, may see in Dr. Middleton’s work a large account of what is contained in the writings of Cicero on this subject; and to this elaborate, entertaining, and truly valuable work, I refer the reader.‡

* *De Natura Deorum*, L. ii. C. ii. (P.) “Quæve anus tam excors inveniri potest, quæ illa, quæ quondam credebantur, apud inferos portenta extimescat?” *Glasg.* 1741, p. 49. See Vol. II. p. 102.

† *Life of Cicero*, 1741, Ed. 2, III. p. 340.

‡ “He maintained,” says *Middleton*, “that there was ‘one God, or Supreme Being; incorporeal, eternal, self-existent; who created the world by his power, and sustained it by his providence.’ (*Tusc. Quæst.* I. 27.) This he inferred from ‘the consent of all nations, the order and beauty of the heavenly bodies, the evident marks of counsel, wisdom, and a fitness to certain ends, observable in the whole, and in every part of the visible world.’ (*Fragm.* L. iii. de *Repub.*)—He believed also a *Divine Providence* constantly presiding over the whole system, and extending its care to all the principal members of it, with a peculiar attention ‘to the conduct and actions of men;’ but leaving ‘the minute and inferior parts’ to the course of his general laws. This he collected from the nature and attributes of the Deity, ‘his omniscience, omnipresence, and infinite goodness,’ that could never desert or neglect what he had once produced into being; and declares that, without this belief, there could be no such thing ‘as piety or religion in the world.’ (*De Fin.* 4, 5, *Acad.* i. 8.)

“He held likewise ‘the immortality of the soul, and its separate existence after death, in a state of happiness or misery.’” For this article of Cicero’s belief, *Middleton* gives as an authority the following passage from *Cato*, 23: “Quod quidem ni ita se haberet, ut animi immortales essent, haud optimi cujusque animus maxime ad immortalitatem niteretur.” *Life*, pp. 340—342. Such is the slender evidence on which Cicero is represented as expecting a future retribution, in “a state of happiness or misery after death.”

Middleton adds, (p. 354,) “But after all these glorious sentiments that we have been ascribing to Cicero, and collecting from his writings, some have been apt to consider them as the flourishes rather of his eloquence, than the conclusions of his

I have little doubt, but that the opinion expressed by *Cæsar*, in his speech, as given by *Sallust*, in the debate concerning the punishment of the associates of *Cataline*, was that which was maintained by the senators in general, and all persons of rank and education at Rome; as it was not delivered by *Cæsar* as his own in particular, but evidently as what he apprehended would be that from which his hearers would not dissent. *Cato*, who spake after him, did not express any disapprobation of what he had said. Indeed, as a Stoic, he could not. *Cicero* himself was present, and did not contradict him. "In sorrow and distress," *Cæsar* said, "death is a state of rest from all trouble, and not of torment. It puts an end to all the evils to which men are subject, and beyond it there is no room for care or joy."*

The result of the whole of this work, even to the most superficial observer, must be a sense of the infinite superiority of the doctrines of *Revelation*, and especially of those of Christianity, to those of any Heathen system whatever; and with this great advantage, that the principles of revelation are perfectly intelligible to the bulk of mankind, and the same with those which actually influence men in the common conduct of life; giving them a knowledge of what they have to hope from the practice of virtue, and what they have to fear in consequence of vice. Moreover, these rules of life, coming immediately from the Author of their being, have a great advantage in point of weight and authority, far more than any mere reasoning, though ever so clear and satisfactory, could have given them.

Accordingly, the precepts of *Moses* were not, like the teachings of the *Greek philosophers*, confined to a few, but

reason; since in other parts of his works he seems to intimate not only a diffidence, but a disbelief 'of the immortality of the soul, and a future state of rewards and punishments;' and especially in his Letters, where he is supposed to declare his mind with the greatest frankness. (*Ep. Fam.* V. 16, 21; VI. 3, 4, 21; *Ad Att.* IV. 10).² *Middleton* suggests "that he was writing, in all probability, to *Epicureans*, and accommodating his arguments to the men;" or that, "in a melancholy hour, when his spirits were depressed, the same argument would not appear to him with the same force." Thus the learned biographer introduces his admission in favour of "the benefit of a more explicit revelation," for which see Vol. II. pp. 99, 100, *Note* †.

Bentley says, "If we seek for *Cicero's* true sentiments, it must not be in his disputes against others, where he had license to say any thing for opposition's sake, but in the books where he dogmatizes himself—I mean his books *De Officiis*, *Tusculanæ*, *De Amicitia*, *De Senectute*, *De Legibus*, in which, and in the remains of others now lost, he declares for the being and providence of God, for the immortality of the soul, for every point that approaches to Christianity." *Phil. Lips.* (L. iii.) Ed. 8, 1743, p. 250.

* See Vol. III. pp. 356, 357.

calculated for the use of the whole nation, the lowest as much as the highest among them. The doctrines and precepts of Christianity are also equally intelligible to all mankind; and they are represented as of equal importance and concern to all, the slave as much as his master. Such a plan of general instruction was never practised, nor, as far as appears, did the very idea of it ever occur to any of the *Greek moralists*. The lectures of the philosophers were given to select disciples, who generally paid for their instruction. With the common people they had nothing to do, while at the same time they encouraged them in their absurd and abominable religious rites, founded on that polytheism and idolatry which they themselves held in contempt; and this was founded on as groundless an opinion as any that ever was entertained by the lowest of the people, viz. that the welfare of the state depended upon the observance of them.

The attention I have given to this subject has increased the sense I had before of the great value of revelation to the virtue and happiness of mankind, and my gratitude to the Universal Parent, that I was born in a Christian country, and in an age so much enlightened as the present. I rejoice also that I have been led, in the course of his providence, to do so much as I have done towards illustrating and defending the evidences of revelation, and towards purging it from those doctrines and practices which were discordant with it, and prevented its reception with many. I am willing to think that my *Comparison of the Institutions of the Hindoos, and other ancient Nations, with those of Moses*, and this work, which extends the comparison to all the sects of the *Grecian philosophers*, will eminently contribute to this end. Lastly, I am thankful to the Author of my being that my life has been prolonged so far as to have been able to complete my design. I could not have closed my life with more satisfaction than after a work of this kind.* May the great Lord of the harvest send more, more zealous, and more able labourers into his harvest.

* This last work was finished a very few days before the Author's death. His son, as he relates, "wrote for him, while he dictated the concluding Section, Preface, and Dedication." "Besides his miscellaneous reading, he read through all the works quoted in this *Comparison*, composed the work and transcribed the whole of it in less than three months." Mr. Priestley's *Continuation*, 8vo. pp. 212, 213; 12mo. pp. 192, 193.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE GRECIAN PHILOSOPHY.

*On the State of Religious and Moral Principles in Greece,
before the time of Pythagoras.*

INTRODUCTION.

IN comparing the moral maxims of the Heathen world with those of revelation, which is the object of this work, it is desirable to go as far back as we can, with any sufficient evidence of what men really thought and did; and though with respect to *Greece* we cannot go so far back as we can with respect to *Hindostan*, and other *oriental* nations, we have two early writers on whom we may depend, viz. the poets *HESIOD* and *HOMER*; and they flourished, according to *Newton*, about eight hundred years* before the Christian æra.

We have also a poem of considerable length, containing precepts for the conduct of life, by *THEOGNIS*, which does not appear to have suffered by interpolation; and he flourished more than four hundred years before Christ; and also a shorter poem of *PHOCYLIDES* of the same age, thought by some to contain Christian sentiments, and therefore to have been interpolated: we have also a collection of sayings of those who are generally called *the Seven Wise Men of Greece*, who lived about six hundred years before Christ, preserved by *Diogenes Laertius*. Though all these are not of equal authority, I shall quote nothing from any of them but what will appear, by a comparison with others, the antiquity of which is unquestionable, to be sufficiently to my purpose.

* 870. *Short Chronicle*, prefixed to the *Chronology*, p. 32.

It is something remarkable that, near as *Greece* is to *Palestine* and *Egypt*, not only all *science*, properly so called, but a knowledge of the common and most useful *arts*, seems to have been unknown for ages in that country, till they were brought to them by the *Phenicians* or *Egyptians*, who came among them to find settlements, after flying from their own countries, and who found them in a state of the greatest barbarism, and divided into a great number of *clans*; for *nations* or *states* they did not deserve to be called; and in a state of hostility with each other, as mankind in a similar situation are always found to be.

These wandering tribes of *Greece*, similar to those in *North America* at present, (for they were a long time in no better, but rather in a worse state with respect to civilization,) must, no doubt, have had some notions of religion; since no people in the world have been entirely without them; but what they were in that rude state of the country it is impossible to trace. The sacred rites and modes of worship that we find accounts of in their writers, were acknowledged to have been borrowed from *Egypt* and other countries; and even *this* was in so early a period, before they had any writers, that the observance of them had been from time immemorial; so that the veneration they had acquired from their antiquity was not to be shaken.

Whatever they were, and they were different in every part of the country, and more or less in every different town and hamlet, they were supposed to be connected with the well-being of the place; so that it would have been thought hazardous to make any change in them. Nor do we find that this was ever done in any Heathen country; they might adopt new gods, and new modes of worship, but they never abandoned their own ancient ones.

This partial civilization of *Greece* must have been a considerable time after the greatest part of the knowledge derived from revelation had been lost in the *East*, as will be evident to any person who compares what he finds on this subject in the earliest of the *Greek* writers with the book of *Job*, to say nothing of the writings of *Moses*. *Job* and his friends, though probably not themselves favoured with any revelation, appear to have had a clear knowledge of the being and the righteous government of the one true God, the maker of the world, and of all things in it, and also of a future state of righteous retribution. At least so it clearly appears to me, though of late, and only of late,

some Christian writers have questioned this;* but how miserably bewildered were the wisest of the *Greeks* with respect to these subjects! Of the knowledge of a future state, on the only principle of reason as well as revelation, viz. that of a proper *resurrection*, we do not perceive the least trace among them. Instead of this, they had adopted a notion of a *separate soul* or a *ghost*, descending after death into a region below the surface of the earth, and the most absurd fables relating to their condition there; though these do not appear to have had any credit with the writers, nor probably with any persons of much thought and reflection among them.

SECTION I.

Of the Obligation to the Worship of the Gods in general.

The general and established opinion of a superior power, or powers, governing the affairs of the world and of men, and the obligation that men were under to worship them, according to the customary rites of each people, was universal; and this was not only the persuasion of the vulgar, but of all the writers, without any exception. In a later period it is probable enough that what several of the writers advanced on this subject might arise from a wish not to shock the prejudices of the populace; but with respect to the period of which I am now treating, there seems to be no reason to doubt of their sincerity; the precepts on this subject are so numerous, and urged in so emphatical a manner by them all. The obligation to worship the gods is urged by *Solon*, one of whose sayings was, "Honour the gods, reverence thy parents."

None of the *Seven Wise Men of Greece* can be said to have been writers, and therefore we have not sufficient authority for their real opinions. But *Theognis* and *Phocylides* were; and in the poem of the former, we find "Pray to the gods, who have great power, for without the gods men have neither good nor evil."† Here we see the belief of this writer in the providence, as well as in the existence, of the gods; but we shall have more abundant evidence of this

* See Vol. XII. pp. 48, 49, 498—502.

† *Vers.* 171, 172. (*P.*) See "*Carmina Theognidis, Phocylidis, et Pythagoræ.*" *Florent.* 1776, p. 136.

hereafter. *Phocylides* says, "In the first place, worship *the gods*,* then honour thy parents, be just to all,—for afterwards God will judge thee."† Indeed, what this poet says of *God* may with some reason be suspected to have been drawn from the principles of revelation, and therefore to be an interpolation; for he says, "There is one God, wise, powerful, and self-sufficient."‡

Hesiod, though in his *Theogony* he retails all the *Grecian* fables concerning the origin and descent of the gods, all of whom he derives from the *earth*, which was therefore prior to them all; yet his poem entitled *On Works* contains excellent sentiments, and good advice on this subject, as well as on many others. Addressing his brother, he says, "According to thy ability, sacrifice to the immortal gods morning and evening, that they may shew thee favour, and that thou mayest purchase the possessions of others, and others not purchase thine."§ "Pray to Jupiter and Ceres, that you may have a good increase."|| According to *Hesiod*, Jupiter destroyed a whole race of men, because they did not give due honour to the gods.¶

Many of *Hesiod's* precepts relating to religion, and the business of husbandry too, savour of a ridiculous superstition; but at this we cannot wonder, considering in how early and ignorant an age he lived. "Do not," says he, "make libation to Jupiter with unwashen hands, nor to the other immortal gods; for they will not hear, but abo-

* *God*, Πρῶτα θεον τίμα.

† *Vers.* 6—8. (*P.*)

‡ *Ver.* 49. (*P.*)

§ *L. i.* 339—341. (*P.*)

"With thy best means perform the ritual part,
Outwardly pure, and spotless at the heart;
Ere on the nightly couch thy limbs be laid,
Or when the stars from sacred sunrise fade.
So shall thy piety accepted move
The heavenly natures to propitious love;
Ne'er shall thy heritage divided be,
But others part their heritage to thee."

Remains of Hesiod, by C. A. Elton, 1809, p. 162.

|| *L. ii.* 83, 84. (*P.*) *Vers.* 465, 466, "Hesiodi quæ extant." *Lipsiæ*, 1778.

"Jove subterrene, chaste Ceres claim thy vow,
When grasping first the handle of the plough;
So shall the sacred gifts of earth appear,
And ripe luxuriance clothe the plenteous ear." *Elton*.

¶ *L. i.* 138, 139. (*P.*)

"Them angry Jove ingulph'd, who dar'd refuse
The gods their glory, and their sacred dues." *Elton*.

minate such prayers.”* His poem *On Days* contains hardly any thing besides directions of the most superstitious and absurd kind, but his two books *On Works* contain many excellent precepts, both of morality and common prudence.

SECTION II.

Of the Superiority of Jupiter, the principal God of the Greeks.

Notwithstanding the *polytheism* of the *Greeks*, they retained so much of the primitive doctrine of *one supreme God*, that they gave this pre-eminence to their *Jupiter*; and indeed seem to have ascribed to him universal dominion, and every attribute requisite for the exercise of it. We see this even in *Homer*, notwithstanding his account of such actions of the same Jupiter as sink him far below the level of many men. But a strolling bard, who got his living by accommodating himself to all kinds of people, could not contradict the popular tales of his countrymen, absurd as he might think them; and they served as a very convenient *machinery*, as it is now called, for his poem.

Besides that one of the epithets of *Jupiter*, in *Homer*, (*μητις*) implies wisdom, he is expressly said, to “excel all the gods and men in wisdom;”† and when the wisdom of *Ulysses* and also that of *Hector* is praised, it is compared to that of Jupiter.‡ He is also styled *the omnipotent*,§ and said “to command mortals and immortals.”|| He is represented as asserting his own superiority to all the gods and goddesses, both in wisdom and power, and they all allow it.¶ When the demolition of several cities, particularly named, is ascribed to him, it is added, “whose power is the greatest.”**

Theognis had the same idea of the great superiority of

* L. ii. 342—344. (P.) Vers. 724—726. Lips.

“When the libation of the morn demands
The sable wine, forbear with unwash’d hands
To lift the cup; with ear averted Jove
Shall spurn thy prayer, and every god above.” Elton.

† *Iliad*, L. xiii. 631, 632. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* L. ii. 169; vii. 75. (P.) Hector is not compared to Jupiter, but the God is called upon to attest the hero’s bravery.

§ *Ibid.* L. ii. 116. (P.) || *Ibid.* L. xii. 242. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* L. viii. 7—9. (P.)

•• *Ibid.* L. ix. 25. (P.)

Jupiter, when he says, “not even *Jupiter*, who rules over mortals and immortals, can please all men.”*

With respect to the issue of the Trojan war, *Homer* says, “the will of *Jupiter* was done,”† as if the whole had depended upon him; and yet there remains some doubt whether there was not, even in the opinion of *Homer* himself, another power in some respects superior to him, and which he could not controul, viz. *Fate*, as we shall see hereafter.

We could not expect such attributes as these of the greatest wisdom and power in the son of *Saturn*, though called *the father of gods and men*;‡ for, according to *Hesiod*, this *Saturn* was only the youngest son, or production, of the earth and the heavens, and had no higher epithet than that of crafty, (*αἰνυλομητης*,) and the *heavens*, one of his parents, was the offspring of the *earth*, the other of them.

This universal opinion of the great superiority of *Jupiter* had certainly a higher origin than *Hesiod*’s *Theogony* gives him, and must have been the remains of a much purer system of theology, which taught the doctrine of *one God*, infinitely wise, powerful, and good, a favourer of virtue, and superintending all the affairs of men, as we shall see this *Jupiter* to do.

SECTION III.

Of Providence.

THE farther we proceed in this examination, the more convinced we shall be that the *Jupiter* of the more sensible of the *Greeks* was a very different person from the son of the crafty *Saturn*, or the lecherous deity of the vulgar, and of the stage; and we shall see that they gave him a field of exertion suitable to the extraordinary powers with which they invested him. According to them, he was nothing less than the supreme governor of the world, and the sovereign disposer of all things in it, and not only of such things as cannot be foreseen or prevented by man, but of such as seem to depend upon human exertion.

Wealth is, to appearance, most certainly acquired by industry and economy, directed by good sense in the conduct of men’s affairs; but, notwithstanding this, it is constantly represented by these writers as the gift of *Jupiter*, and if a man be poor, it is by them ascribed to his not favouring

* *Vers.* 801, 802. (*P.*)

† *Iliad*, L. i. 5. (*P.*)

‡ *Ibid.* L. xv. 47. (*P.*)

him. *Hesiod* says, "It is Jupiter who raises up one and depresses another."* "It is Jupiter who gives poverty to men."† *Theognis* says, "No person is rich or poor," and he adds, "good or bad," without a deity. He makes "some rich and others poor."‡ "God surrounds a good man with every blessing, good success, and freedom from folly; and we ought to bear whatever the gods impose upon us."§ Agreeably to this he prays, "May Apollo and Jupiter grant that I may live free from evil, enjoying health and riches."|| He says, however, "God gives wealth to many worthless men, who are of no use to themselves or their friends;"¶ still, however, it is disposed of, it is the gift of the gods. And he says, "If the gods give a bad man wealth and riches, like a fool, he cannot restrain his malice; but a just man is the same in good or bad fortune."** He, therefore, reasonably makes this a motive to a good use of riches: "Whatever God gives to you, of that give to the poor." He also makes it a motive to bear misfortunes with patience: "In misfortune pray to the gods, and make no boast."††

According to the poetical representation of *Homer*, "There are placed at the gates of Jupiter, two casks, one of them containing good, and the other evil," out of which, it is hereby intimated, that he gives to man, from one or other of them as he pleases.‡‡ According to the uniform language of *Homer*, *honour* is also the gift of *Jupiter*, as well as advantages of every other kind. §§

The events of *war* are, according to *Homer*, no less at the disposal of *Jupiter*, than wealth and honour, though the *Greeks* had a god, *Mars*, whose peculiar province it was to attend to it. He is expressly called, "the arbiter of war,"||| and is said, "to give the victory to whom he pleases." "It is he," he says, "that makes a man a warrior, and he soon turns to flight the valiant."¶¶ He even inspired *Ajax* with

* L. i. 4, 5. (P.)

"With equal ease the Ruler of the sky

The humble lifts, and casts the proud from high." *Elton.*

† L. ii. 257. (P.) *Ver.* 638, *Lips.*

‡ *Vers.* 157, 158, 166. (P.)

§ *Vers.* 589—591. (P.)

|| *Vers.* 1115—1118. (P.)

¶ *Vers.* 863—865. (P.)

** *Vers.* 319—322. (P.)

†† *Vers.* 357—359. (P.)

‡‡ *Iliad*, L. xxiv. 527. (P.)

"Two urns by Jove's high throne have ever stood,

The source of evil one, and one of good;

From thence the cup of mortal man he fills,

Blessings to these, to those distributes ills." *Pope.*

§§ *Iliad*, L. ii. 197. (P.)

||| *Ibid.* L. iv. 84. (P.)

¶¶ *Ibid.* L. xvi. 689, 690. (P.)

fear.* *Hesiod*, agreeably to these sentiments, says, "Jupiter does not visit a just nation with war."†

In like manner this poet considers the same *Jupiter* as the giver of *wine*, though *Bacchus* is said to have discovered it, to have imparted it to men, and to preside over every thing relating to it. Nay, *Hesiod*, in three or four different places of his *Theogony*, gives the gods in general the glorious title of (δοτῆρες ἑάων) *the givers of good*.‡ It was a saying of *Bias*, "Whatever good you do, ascribe it to the gods." These are precious remains of a very remote antiquity, derived, no doubt, from the most genuine and purest source.

In order to this government of the world, and the sovereign distributions of every thing in it, it was necessary that the gods, and especially *Jupiter*, the chief of them, should know every thing that passes in it; and, accordingly, this is taken for granted by all the writers within this period. "Do not," says *Theognis*, "swear falsely by the gods. This is not to be borne, for nothing can be concealed from them."§ "The eye of Jupiter," says *Hesiod*, "who sees every thing, and understands every thing, is not ignorant of any thing that passes within a state."|| He is, therefore, frequently appealed to in *Homer* as always present, and a witness to contracts.¶ He is prayed to** to determine the lot that was to decide which of the *Grecian* warriors was to fight *Hector*. It was a saying of *Thales*, (who said that God had no beginning and will have no end,) that "neither the actions nor the thoughts of bad men are concealed from the gods."

As attending more especially to the affairs of states and kingdoms, Jupiter is represented as "the guardian of kings,"†† and the *Greeks* are said to have derived their laws from him.‡‡ How uncertain any particular event may be

* *Iliad*, L. xi. 543. (P.)

† L. i. 225—229. (P.)

"But they who never from the right have stray'd,
Who as the citizen, the stranger aid,
They and their cities flourish; genial Peace
Dwells in their borders, and their youth increase.
Nor Jove, whose radiant eyes behold afar,
Hangs forth in heaven the signs of grievous War." *Elton*.

‡ *Vers.* 46, 632, 664. (P.)

§ *Vers.* 1195, 1196. (P.)

|| L. i. 267—269. (P.)

"Jove at his awful pleasure looks from high
With all-discerning, and all-knowing eye;
Nor hidden from its ken what injur'd right
Within the city walls eludes the light." *Elton*.

¶ As in *Iliad*, L. vii. 76, 411. (P.)

** *Ibid.* 179. (P.)

†† *Ibid.* L. ii. 98. (P.)

‡‡ *Ibid.* L. i. 238, 239. (P.)

with respect to man, it is not so, according to *Theognis*, with respect to God. "It is difficult," he says, "to know how a thing that is not finished will end, or how God will bring it about."*

This is frequently the language of our scriptures with respect to the constant attention that God gives to the affairs of men, distributing health, wealth, power, success in war, and every other natural advantage, or withholding them, and appointing in their place calamity of every kind, as he pleases, and for reasons that it is not in the power of man to comprehend. These Heathens do not, however, seem to have entertained the same persuasion that the sacred writers had of the wisdom and goodness of the Supreme Being in these mysterious dispensations, which, whether they could distinguish or not, they always take for granted. These Heathens also never express the noble sentiment that occurs so frequently in the Scriptures, that hardships of every kind are frequently appointed to be the lot of the righteous, for an exercise of their virtue, and as the correction of a kind and judicious parent; and that a proper reception of them, and behaviour under them, will entitle the virtuous sufferers to a glorious reward. Having no knowledge of a future state, they could not see so far into the conduct of Providence.

SECTION IV.

Of Jupiter's Regard to Virtue.

As the early *Greek* writers have given to *Jupiter* the government of the world, though not the creation of it, and invested him with powers equal to it, they have not failed to give him a disposition worthy of that high station, representing him as the friend of virtue in general, and especially of justice, becoming so great a governor.

Hesiod has many excellent observations, expressed with great energy, on this subject: "Let us," he says, "give right judgments in contests, for these are from Jupiter."† "Exercise justice and forget violence, this is the law that Jupiter imposes upon men, and that only beasts of prey

* *Ver.* 1074. (*P.*)

† *L. i.* 35. (*P.*) "—— let Justice guide,

Best boon of heaven, and future strife decide." *Elton.*

should live by violence and slaughter.”* “Jupiter, seeing at a distance, punishes injustice and wickedness; the people die, women do not bear children, families decrease, and their ships perish.”† “To a just man Jupiter gives wealth, and his descendants prosper; but the unjust man injures himself and his posterity.”‡

To enforce these admonitions, he gives the following beautiful allegory: “O kings, respect justice; for the gods, who are conversant among men, see all the unjust judgments of those who do not regard their threatenings: for there are three myriads, the sons of Jupiter on the earth, the guardians of men, who take an account both of justice and injustice, having vestments of air, and visiting all parts of the earth. Justice is a virgin, the daughter of Jupiter; and if any person offend her, she immediately complains of it to Jupiter, and the people suffer for the offences of their kings, who do not decide justly.”§ Lastly, he represents *Jupiter* as having resolved to destroy the fifth, and last, race of men, on account of their vices and depravity in general.||

Theognis concurs in the same sentiments with *Hesiod* in representing *Jupiter* as the friend and benefactor of good men. “The wealth,” he says, “that Jupiter gives to a just man is permanent. By injustice and oppression many

* L. i. 275—280. (P.)

“To justice cleave, from violence forbear,
This law, the wisdom of the god assign’d
To human race: and to the bestial kind,
To birds of air, and fishes of the wave,
And beasts of earth devouring instinct gave.
In them no justice lives: he bade be known
This better sense to reasoning man alone.” *Elton.*

† L. i. 239—247. (P.)

‡ L. i. 282—285. (P.)

“Who sins against the right, his wilful tongue
With perjuries of lying witness hung,
Lo! he is hurt beyond the hope of cure;
Dark is his race, nor shall his name endure.
Who fears his oath shall leave a name to shine
With bright’n lustre through his latest line.” *Elton.*

§ L. i. 248—262. (P.)

“A virgin pure is Justice: from the king
Of heav’n her birth; a venerable thing,
And glorious to the deities on high,
Whose mansion is yon everlasting sky.
Driv’n by spiteful wrong she takes her seat
In lowly grief at Jove’s eternal feet:
There of the soul unjust her plaints ascend,
So rue the nations when their kings offend;
When uttering wiles and brooding thoughts of ill,
They bend the laws and wrest them to their will.” *Elton.*

| L. i. 180. (P.)

acquire wealth ; but it will be lost, for the mind of God is superior.”*

More especially, *Jupiter*, and the gods in general, are represented as offended at *perjury*, and determined to punish it. “The immortal gods,” says *Phocylides*, “hate a false oath, whoever takes it.”† And *Theognis* says, “never swear that any thing shall not be ; for the gods are angry at it.”‡ In Homer, *Jupiter* is frequently appealed to for the observance of oaths, and requested to punish the guilty.§ *Talthybius* calls to witness, in the first place, *Jupiter*, styled on this occasion by the remarkable character of *the greatest and the best*, then the sun, the earth, and the furies, who, he says, punish the perjured under the earth.||

Other vices are occasionally mentioned as incurring the indignation of *Jupiter*. “Father Jupiter will not favour a liar.”¶ “May the celestial gods,” says *Theognis*, “destroy the man that shall by smooth speeches deceive his friend.”** *Hesiod* says, “He who deceives the orphan, or abuses his aged parents, Jupiter is certainly angry with him, and at the last he will give an account of all his unjust actions.”†† In Homer, Menelaus prays that “Jupiter may give him to punish the wicked Alexander, that hereafter all men may dread to injure a person who has received them with kindness.”‡‡ *Chilon* being asked what Jupiter was doing, said, “He is humbling the proud and exalting the humble.”

No *Jew* or *Christian* could appeal with more confidence to the justice and equity of the true God than these persons do to their *Jupiter*. It is evident, therefore, that, whatever name they gave this object of their worship, they had the same idea of his general character ; and this must have been derived from the same source. The belief of a righteous Governor of the world appears never to have been wholly abandoned by mankind. Though the name was changed, and multiplicity took the place of unity, what was most essential to the righteous administration of affairs was, in a considerable degree, though accompanied with much super-

* *Ver.* 197. (P.)

† *Ver.* 15. (P.)

‡ *Ver.* 659. (P.)

§ *Iliad*, L. iii. 320—323. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* L. xix. 258—260. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* L. iv. 235. (P.)

** *Ver.* 850. (P.)

†† L. i. 330—334. (P.)

“Who dares by crafty wickedness abuse
His trust, and robs the orphans of their dues;
Who on the threshold of afflictive age
His hoary parent stings with taunting rage;
On him shall Jove in anger look from high,
And deep requite the dark iniquity.” *Elton.*

‡‡ *Iliad*, L. iii. 351—354. (P.)

stition, retained. The Heathens were deficient chiefly in their ignorance of a future state, in which the seeming irregularities, and many unaccountable appearances in this life, will be rectified to universal satisfaction.

SECTION V.

Of the Influence of the Fates.

IT is something remarkable that, notwithstanding the omnipotence which the Heathens ascribed to their gods, and their controul over the affairs of men, they had an idea of a power which the gods themselves either could not, or did not choose to oppose. This was *Fate*, or *the Fates*. And yet this was a divinity to which they never ascribed any degree of wisdom.

According to *Hesiod*, the *Fates* were the daughters of *Jupiter*, and he gave them this extraordinary power. “*Jupiter*” (and whom, on this occasion, he styles *the wise*, Μητιετα) “produced the *Parcæ* (*Μοῖραι*), *Clotho*, *Lachesis*, and *Atropos*, to whom he gave the greatest honour, who distribute good and evil to mortal men.”* But in another place of the same poem, he says, that “*Night* produced odious *Fate* (*Μοῖρα*) and the black *Parcæ* and *Death*, without the concurrence of any deity—and the fatal goddesses, and cruel *Parcæ*, *Clotho*, *Lachesis*, and *Atropos*, who appoint good and evil to men that are born, who, revenging the offences of men and gods, never remit of their anger till they have punished the offender.”† Here the same powers have a different origin, and are altogether independent of *Jupiter*, or any of the gods, and superior to them all.

Besides the sovereign power over life and death, and external advantages of every kind, the affections and characters of men are sometimes ascribed to these *Fates*. “*The Fates*,” says *Homer*, “give a patient mind to man.”‡ However, with respect to the important article of life or death, their decision was never violated; and the time, and all the circumstances of a man’s death were determined by them, as well as the death itself. Thus *Neptune* assures *Achilles*, who knew that he was never to return from the siege of *Troy*, that it was not his fate to be drowned in the river, when he apprehended that he was in great danger from it.§

* *Theogonia*, 903—905. (P.)

† *Iliad*, L. xxiv. 49. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* 211—213, 217—222. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* L. xxi. 291. (P.)

He wishes that he might die by the hand of *Hector*, a brave man, but he knew that he should fall by a less noble hand.*

Whatever the gods might wish, they never failed to acquiesce in the known decision of the Fates. *Achilles*, lamenting his destiny, says, that "Hercules, though most dear to Jupiter, was conquered by Fate and the anger of Juno."† "It was in the Fates," he says, "that two friends of his should die before Troy, as well as that he was not to return to Greece."‡ It was one of the sayings of *Pittacus*, "The gods cannot oppose Fate."

On several occasions the gods express some degree of fear lest the orders of the Fates should be violated. *Neptune*, expressing his regard for *Aeneas*, advises him not to fight before the death of *Achilles*, though he knew that it was not in the Fates that he should die by his hand.§ Both *Apollo* and *Jupiter* express their concern lest the Greeks should take Troy before the time ordained by the Fates.||

On some occasions, *Jupiter*, who is said to have given this great power to the Fates, seems to think it was in his power to controul them, and to have been half inclined to do it; but he yielded to the remonstrances of the other gods, who opposed his resolution. When *Hector* was driven by *Achilles* round the walls of Troy, *Jupiter* expressed an inclination to save him from death; but *Minerva* says to him, "Would you deliver from death a mortal man, destined to die by the Fates? Do what you please, but we, the rest of the gods, will not give our consent."¶ He acknowledged that it was in the Fates that *Sarpedon* should die by the hand of *Patroclus*, and wished to convey him to a place of safety; but *Juno* expostulating with him on the subject, he acquiesced.** The independence of the decision of these Fates on the will of the gods seems not to have been a fixed principle; for *Ulysses*, speaking to *Tiresias* in the *Elysian* fields, says, according to *Homer*, "Perhaps the gods themselves have decreed these things†† (επεικλωσαν). At what time this decision of the Fates was made, is not said in these writers; but it was commonly supposed to be at the birth of every particular person. It was, however, con-

* *Iliad*, L. xxi. 279. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. xviii. 328. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* L. xx. 30, xxi. 516. (P.)

** *Ibid.* L. xvi. 431—443. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. xviii. 118. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* L. xx. 336. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* L. xxii. 177—181. (P.)

†† *Odyssey*, L. xi. 138. (P.)

sidered as so irrevocable, that these Fates, though goddesses, were never prayed to, it being taken for granted, that whatever they had advanced, it would never be altered.

There was another celestial power acknowledged by the *Greeks*, but seemingly not so early as the times of *Hesiod* and *Homer*, as they make no mention of her. This was *Fortune*; for whatever was afterwards ascribed to her, is by him, and all the other writers that I have quoted, ascribed to Jupiter, or some other of the gods.

Neither of these powers are, however, known in the Scriptures. According to them, every thing in the world, life and death, riches and poverty, success, or the want of it, in war, and undertakings of any other kind, are ascribed to the providence of that *one God* who created and governs all things, and whose will, independently of any such powers as those of *Fate* or *Fortune*, decides upon every thing. To him we are taught to look for every thing, as being wholly dependent upon him, and accountable to him. This frees the mind from that perplexity to which the wisest of the Heathens must have been subject, while they had any apprehension of this *blind Fate*, to which, whether willingly or unwillingly, their gods themselves, without excepting even Jupiter, submitted.

SECTION VI.

Of Moral Duties, and also of Death and the Consequences of it.

ALMOST all the writers that I have quoted in this part of my work deliver excellent precepts both respecting *morals*, properly so called, and the prudent conduct of life, similar to the *Proverbs of Solomon*, to which they will often well bear to be compared. Many parts of *Hesiod's* poem *On Works*, and the sentences of *Theognis*, are particularly valuable on this account, though the superstition of the former, or rather that of the age and the country in which he lived, as appears in the second part of the poem, viz. *On Days*, is extreme.

On the subject of *death*, and its consequences, there is a remarkable silence in all the serious writers of this period. The knowledge of the doctrine of a resurrection was completely lost, but there are traces of a belief that the soul survives the grave, though not of any state of righteous retribution, in which the righteous will be rewarded, and

the wicked punished for their actions here, except in those fables of *Homer* concerning the state of ghosts in *Tartarus* and *Elysium*, probably not seriously believed by himself; so that the great sanction of virtue, familiar to *Jews* and *Christians*, was unknown to them.

In *Phocylides* are some sentences which express a clear belief of souls surviving the grave. "Immortal souls," he says, "free from old age, live for ever."* "All the dead are equal, but God governs souls."† "We hope to see the remains of the dead come out of the earth into light, after which they will be gods; for incorruptible souls remain in the dead. The spirit is the image of God given to mortals."‡ According to this, the soul continues attached to the body some time after it is dead, which was the opinion of the *Egyptians*, and the cause, as it is thought, of their endeavouring to preserve the bodies so long by embalming them, and keeping them in their houses.

After the persual of this, how happy ought we to think ourselves for enjoying the glorious light of the gospel, by which, and by which alone, *life and immortality are brought to light!* Without this light, *the wisdom of the world* availed but little to the moral improvement and happiness of man. And as we proceed, we shall find no increase of light, but rather of darkness, with respect to this subject.

OF THE

PHILOSOPHY OF PYTHAGORAS.

INTRODUCTION.

PYTHAGORAS appears to have been the first of all the Greeks who gave his whole time to philosophy, either in the acquisition of knowledge, or in the communication of it to others. He is said to have been a native of *Samos*, and after having had some instruction from *Pherecydes* of *Scyros*, (of whom little is known, except that he had some knowledge of *Oriental* philosophy,) he went to *Egypt*, where, having the patronage of the king *Amasis*, he obtained leave

* *Ver.* 110. (P.)

† *Ver.* 106. (P.)

‡ *Vers.* 98—101. (P.)

to be initiated into the religion and philosophy of the *Egyptians*. The priests made him undergo a very severe discipline, including circumcision, but he submitted to every thing they enjoined; and, continuing in the country twenty-two years, may be presumed to have acquired all the knowledge that could be obtained there. Finding on his return no sufficient encouragement in his endeavours to open a school of philosophy in his own country, he finally settled at *Crotona*, in that part of *Italy* which, in consequence of having been colonized by *Greeks*, was called *Magna Græcia*; from which his sect of philosophy was called the *Italic*. Here his disciples were very numerous, and they continued with more or less reputation about two hundred years.

It is not possible to ascertain with any certainty what it was that was taught by *Pythagoras* himself. For, besides committing nothing to writing, he enjoined the strictest secrecy on all his pupils, training them to the most severe discipline, the first part of which is said to have been an uninterrupted silence of five years. By this means, nothing of his doctrines transpired till a little before the time of *Plato*, which was something more than a century after the establishment of the sect, when several philosophers in *Greece* having acquired much reputation by their writings, the masters of the *Italic* schools began to publish what they had been taught of its doctrines, but mixed with their own.

Of these later *Pythagoreans* there are extant two curious and valuable treatises, one by *Ocellus Lucanus*,* and the other by *Timæus Locrus*,† besides many large extracts by *Stobæus*, from the writings of *Archytas*,‡ and besides many fragments from *Theages*,§ the *Sentences of Democrates*,|| *Secundus*,¶ *Demophilus*,** and *Sextus*,†† and verses which have obtained for their excellence the title of *golden*, written, as *Fabricius* supposes, by *Empedocles*, but certainly by some learned *Pythagorean*. From these sources we must now be content to collect the best account that we can of the gene-

* "De Universi Natura." *Gale*, Amst. 1688, pp. 499—538.

† "De Anima Mundi et Natura." *Ibid.* pp. 539—566.

‡ "In libro de Bono Viro et Beato." *Ibid.* pp. 673—681.

§ "De Animo, tanquam efficiente; in libro de Virtutibus." *Ibid.* pp. 681—684.

|| "Democratis Philosophi Auræ Sententiæ." *Ibid.* pp. 626—632.

¶ "Secundi Atheniensis Sophistæ Sententiæ." *Ibid.* pp. 633—642.

** "Demophili Similitudines, seu Vitæ Curatio ex Pythagoreis." *Ibid.* pp. 611—625.

†† "Sexti Pythagorei Sententiæ, è Græco in Latinum à Ruffino versæ." *Ibid.* pp. 643—656.

ral principles of the *Pythagorean* philosophy. They are all* published in Gale's *Opuscula Mythologica*,† and some of them I suspect to contain sentiments that do not properly belong to any system of Heathen philosophy, but to have been borrowed from Christianity. In the choice of these I have been very sparing, and they will be noticed, as it is my object not to go beyond the time when Christianity became the religion of the Roman emperors.

From the genuine tracts above-mentioned, it will not be difficult to collect a pretty just idea of the principles of this sect, at least as improved by the followers of *Pythagoras*; and as to what he taught that has never come to light, which was probably something more near to the Oriental philosophy, it is of little consequence to know at present.

SECTION I.

Concerning God.

THAT God is the maker and governor of the world, and the sovereign disposer of all events, was taken for granted by all the *Pythagoreans*, and there is a great display of genuine piety in what remains of their writings. *Timæus* says, "God is the author and parent of all things; but what is produced by him we see with our eyes."‡ The honour due to God, and to other objects of worship, according to their respective ranks, is inculcated in the first of the golden verses of *Pythagoras*: "In the first place, honour the gods as the laws direct, and observe oaths. Then venerate the famous heroes and the infernal gods, performing, with respect to them, the rites directed by the laws. Then honour thy parents and nearest relations." This probably refers to some religious ceremony in honour of men's ancestors, which is to this day a great article in the religion of the *Hindoos*.

All this, however, might be in obedience to the laws, the omission of which would have been punishable; but the author of these verses farther directs to begin no work without asking the Divine blessing for its success. Evil, as well as good, is here ascribed to the providence of God: "What-

* Except the *Golden Verses*.

† "Physica et Ethica, Gr. et Lat." *Cantab.* 1671; *Amst.* 1688, with great improvements. Dr. Thomas Gale was Dean of York, where he died in 1702, aged 66. See *Gen. Biog. Dict.* V. pp. 501—505.

‡ *Gale*, p. 549.

ever portion you have of the calamity that befalls men, through the Divine appointment, bear with patience, and without complaining. However, remedy the evil if you can, and consider that the *Parcæ* do not assign much of this to good men." Here the assignment of the *Parcæ* is considered as the same with the will of the gods. One of the sayings collected by *Demophilus*, is, "God sends evil to men not in anger, for anger is foreign to God. This takes place when things come by accident; whereas, nothing can come to God but what he wills."*

There is much good sense, as well as piety, in the precepts of *Pythagoras* relating to God, at least such as are ascribed to him by those who collected his sayings. Among them are the following: "Gifts and sacrifices confer no honour on God, but a pious mind joins it finally to God. For things that are similar must be joined to things similar."† "God has not on the earth a place more suitable to him than a chaste and pure mind."‡ "If you consider that whatever is done by the mind or the body is seen by God, you will revere his presence, from whom nothing can be concealed; for you will have God residing in your breast."§ Having mentioned a variety of good works, the *golden verses* add, "These will put you in the way of divine virtue."

It is the more probable that these pious sentiments were the genuine produce of the *Pythagorean* school, as it was nearer to the patriarchal times, and something like those in the book of *Job*, when true piety was still more prevalent, and more free from superstition. We shall, however, see a lamentable departure from the simple idea of revelation, when we see what the *Pythagoreans* say concerning the structure of the world, and the nature of the human soul, on which subjects they led the way to all the wild ideas of *Plato*, and some of the sentiments of *Aristotle*, though these do not seem to have been willing to acknowledge their obligations to them.

SECTION II.

Of the Structure of the World.

WE shall see in this Section how far the minds of the most intelligent men can wander from reason and common sense, when they speculate on subjects that are above their

* *Gale*, p. 620.
§ *Ibid.* p. 621.

† *Ibid.* p. 621.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 625.

comprehension, and on which, having no light from revelation, it was impossible that they should get any at all.

Moses, with great simplicity, as expressing all that he believed, and all that he could know on the subject, says, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." But these philosophers, having lost every tradition of this kind, (which, however, was retained in the *East*,) maintained that the universe had no beginning, as well as that it will have no end. "All plants and animals," says *Ocellus Lucanus*, "and also the human race, have always been, and will ever be as they now are."* "This, too, is contrary to the doctrine of our Scriptures, which holds out to us a far more pleasing prospect, viz. a perpetual progress to a better state of things, and the great advantage which virtuous men will derive from it, in their own constant improvement, and the removal of every impediment to it, with every thing else that is painful and distressing to them. Of this no Heathen philosopher had the least idea.

Notwithstanding the opinion of the *Pythagoreans*, of one Supreme God, they admitted many inferior deities, and particularly considered *the world* as endued with life and divinity; and in their account of the formation of it, we shall see the *intelligible ideas* of *Plato*, which he, no doubt, borrowed from them. "God," says *Timæus*, "formed the world out of all kinds of matter. It is one, the only begotten, endued with a soul and reason. When God willed to produce a perfect offspring, he made this generated god not to be perishable from any cause except by the God that made it. The world, therefore, remains as it was created by God, free from corruption and death. It is the best of all created things, since it arose from the best of causes. In this the Creator proposed to himself no model made by hand, but his own *ideas* and *intelligible essence*, according to which, when things are made with exquisite art, they are the most beautiful, and require not to be mended by any new operation."†

In a farther account of these *ideas*, he says, "There is in the universe something that is permanent and intelligible, the exemplar of the things that are produced, which are in a perpetual flux. They are called *ideas*, and are comprehended by the mind." He afterwards calls these *ideas forms* which are comprehended by the mind and *science*: "Before the heavens existed, there were *forms* and *matter*,

* Ch. iii. (P.) *Gale*, p. 528.

† *Ibid.* pp. 545, 546.

and God, who is good, is the author of that which is best.”*

The *Pythagoreans* speak of every thing as adapted to *harmonical numbers*, and on this subject *Timæus* goes into many particulars, which it would be tedious to recite. “Of these,” however, he says, “the soul of the world is constituted. Life,” he says, “supports the body, and the cause of this is the soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$). Harmony supports the world, and the cause ($\alpha\iota\tau\iota\alpha$) of this is God.”†

“God,” he says, placed the soul of the world in its centre, and also produced it externally,” probably meaning that, though seated in the centre, its operation goes beyond it.

The world is not the only inferior deity in this system. “In every part of the world,” says *Ocellus Lucanus*, “there are inhabitants of a nature proper to it, as gods in the heavens, men upon the earth, in the higher regions demons, and of course the race of man must always continue.”‡

Matter, these philosophers seem to have considered as having always existed, independently of the Deity, and as having been subject to laws which he could not wholly controul. “Whence,” *Timæus* says, though with some degree of obscurity, “there are two causes of all things, *mind* of those things which are produced with reason, and *necessity* of those which exist by a kind of force, according to the powers and properties of body.”§ They, therefore, did not want any other cause of evil besides matter.

SECTION III.

Of the Human Soul.

According to these *Pythagoreans*, the human soul is not of a nature so distinct from the body but that it has both some connexion with it, and some properties in common with it. “The source of vice,” says *Timæus*, “is in pleasure and grief, desire and fear, which, being excited in the body, get mixed with the soul, and have obtained various names from their various effects, as love, desire,” &c.,|| so that the *passions* are common to the soul and the body, though they are first excited in the latter.

They maintained, however, the superiority of the mind

* Gale, pp. 544, 545.

† *Fragmenta. (P.)* In the *Fragmenta quædam Pythagoreorum*, at the end of the *Opuscula*, there is no Fragment attributed to *Timæus*.

‡ Ch. ii. (*P.*) Gale, pp. 529, 530.

|| *Ibid.* p. 562.

§ *Ibid.* p. 543.

to the body, as when *Archytas* says, "In all human things wisdom is most excellent, as the sight is more so than the other senses, the mind (*νοῦς*) than the soul, (*ψυχή*), and the sun than the stars."* Here we have two parts of the soul, or of the man, distinguished by their respective names, the former signifying the seat of intelligence, and the other, that of mere animal life.

Timæus explains this division of the soul farther, when he says, "One part of the human soul is endued with reason and intelligence, but the other is without reason, and stupid. The former is the more excellent, but both have their seat about the head, that the other parts of the soul, and of the body too, might be subservient to it, as being under the same tabernacle of the body. But that part of the soul which is without reason, and which is prone to anger, has its seat about the heart; and that which has concupiscence has its seat about the liver. But the brain is the principle and root of the spinal marrow; and in it the soul has the seat of its government."†

Theages divides the soul in the same manner. "One of the parts," he says, "has reason, another anger, and the third desire. The virtue of prudence," he says, "belongs to the first part, fortitude to the second, and temperance to the third, and justice is the virtue of the whole soul."‡

How much more simple and satisfactory is the short account that *Moses* gives of the formation and constituent principles of man! After giving an account of the formation of all other animals, he says, that in the last place, God made man *of the dust of the ground*, and then breathed into him the breath of life, after which he was a living soul, or being; that is, after *the man* was completely made, with all his powers, those of the mind as well as those of the body, God enabled him to *breathe*, by which all his powers were excited, and brought into actual exercise. Nothing is here said of any division of the principle of life; but he adds, that *man was made in the likeness of God*, meaning, probably, having capacity of knowing, and of having intercourse with him, which other animals have not; and that he *gave him dominion over all the other animals*, properties which he has, and fully exercises.

The account given by these *Pythagoreans* of the state of the soul after death, is still more unsatisfactory and incon-

* Gale, p. 732. (P.)

† Ibid. p. 688. (P.)

‡ Ibid. pp. 556, 557. (P.)

sistent. According to the *golden verses*, the soul is immortal. "If," says the author, "when you have left the body, you arrive at the free ether, you will be with the incorruptible, immortal gods, and be no longer mortal."* *Timæus* gives the following more detailed account of the power of man to attain this state, as well as of the punishment of those whose vices disqualify them for it; but it is with a sufficient intimation, that he considered it as founded on mere fable, calculated for the use of the vulgar, and by no means agreeable to truth; so that it is probable that at this time the *Pythagoreans* had wholly abandoned all belief in a future state: "Music," he says, "and the directrix of it, philosophy, are adapted by God and the laws, for the improvement of the mind, and they accustom, persuade, and compel that part of the soul which has no reason, to be gentle, free from anger and desire. Science, and ancient and venerable philosophy, free the mind from false and vain opinions and great ignorance, and raise it to the contemplation of divine things; to the knowledge of which, if a man so attain as to be content with his lot, and to rise above the accidents of life, and thus aspire after a moderate and temperate life, he is in the way to true felicity. And certainly, he to whom God has given this lot is led by the truest opinions to the most happy life. But if, on the other hand, any be refractory, and will not obey these sacred precepts, he will be amenable to those laws which denounce both celestial and infernal punishments. Unrelenting punishments await the unhappy manes, and other things mentioned by the *Ionic* poet, as derived from ancient tradition, by the hearing of which he wished to draw the minds of men to religion and purity. On this account I approve of his conduct. As we cure diseased bodies by unwholesome medicines, if they will not yield to those that are wholesome, so we restrain minds with deceitful discourses, if they will not yield to true ones. On this account, too, foreign punishments are denounced," (that is, such as were believed by foreign nations,) "as the transmigrations of souls into various bodies, viz. those of the idle into the bodies of women; murderers, into those of wild beasts; of the libidinous, into those of hogs or bears; of the light and rash, into fowls; of the idle and foolish, into aquatic animals."† Certainly the man who could write this, could have no belief

* *Ver.* 70.† *Op. Myth.* pp. 565, 566. (P.)

in any future punishment of the wicked, whatever he might think of the state of the virtuous after death.

But when the question *What is death*, was put to *Secundus*, his answer is decisively against any future state at all. "It is," he says, "an eternal sleep, the dread of the rich, the desire of the poor, the inevitable event, the robber of man, the flight of life, and the dissolution of all things."* Such were the comfortless prospects of this philosophy in its most advanced state. What a wretched choice would a Christian make by exchanging his religion for this!

SECTION IV.

Of Good and Evil, Virtue and Vice.

The writings of the *Pythagoreans* contain numberless excellent moral maxims and precepts, expressed in the most forcible language, and their account of what is *good* is agreeable to common sense, which we shall see was not the case with many of the philosophers who came after them.

"Some goods," says *Archytas*, "are desired on their own account, some on the account of other things, and a third both for their own sake and that of other things. What then is that good which is desired on its own account, and not for the sake of any thing else? It is happiness. For the sake of this we desire every thing else, but this for the sake of nothing farther."† "A good man is not immediately and necessarily happy, but a happy man must be good."‡ "You must not," says *Demophilus*, "hastily pronounce that man happy who depends upon friends or children, or any thing that is liable to change and decay, for all these are inconstant; but on himself, and on God. This only is firm and stable."§

There was a great degree of austerity in the discipline and general maxims of the *Pythagoreans*, which forbade all unnecessary gratifications. With respect to the commerce of the sexes, *Ocellus Lucanus* says, "God gave proper instruments and appetites to men not for the sake of pleasure, but for the propagation of the species.—If there be any commerce with women with any other view, the offspring will be the bane of society. They will be wicked and miserable,

* *Op. Myth.* p. 641. (P.) "*Quid est Mors? Æternus somnus, divitum pavor, pauperum desiderium, inevitabilis eventus, latro hominis, fuga vitæ, resolutio omnium.*" See "*Secundi Philosophi Responsa ad interrogata Adriani.*" *Ibid.*

† *Gale*, p. 674. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 673.

§ *Ibid.* p. 624. (P.)

hateful to God, to demons, and to men, also to families and states.—For this reason,” he adds, “laws were made in Greece that men should have no commerce with their own mothers, daughters, or sisters, nor in any sacred place, or in public.” He also says, that “all commerce contrary to nature,” by which he no doubt meant sodomy, “must be prevented.”*

Many of the sentences of *Demophilus* breathe such a spirit of devotion, that they are justly suspected of a purer source than any Heathen philosophy. On this account I shall quote but few of them. “Do not ask of God what you cannot keep; for no gift of God can be taken from you. He, therefore, will not give what you cannot keep.—No gift can be received from God greater than virtue.—A frugal and poor philosopher lives a life like to that of God, and he considers it as the greatest wealth, that he possesses nothing external (that is, out of his controul), nothing unnecessary; for the acquisition of riches inflames covetousness, but to live well and happily, nothing is requisite but to act justly.—Being born of God, and having our root in him, we should adhere to it; for springs of water, and the productions of the earth, dry up, or putrify, when cut off from their respective sources.—It is impossible that the same person should be addicted to pleasure, or the acquisition of riches, and be devoted to God.—And though he should sacrifice hecatombs, he is the more impious, and farther removed from religion and God.”†

But what are the best maxims, precepts, or even laws, without proper sanctions? They will be admired, and respected, by those who are previously disposed to observe them; but on others, which is the thing principally to be aimed at, they will have no effect whatever; but may even be ridiculed, and openly disregarded. And what are the proper sanctions of virtue and piety, which evidently have not always any reward in this life, but that providence of God which extends to *another*, and with this the *Pythagorean* philosophy was not provided.

* Chap. iv., *Gale*, pp. 531, 532, 535. (P.) Καθολον δε δι περιαναιρειν τας τε παρα φυσιν γενεσεις, και τας μεθ' εβρεως γινομενας. *Ibid.* p. 535.

† *Ibid.* pp. 620, 622, 624, 625. (P.) Therefore, adds *Demophilus*, we ought to shun a voluptuary as an impious and sacrilegious person. The *Sentences* then conclude with the declaration, that God has not upon earth a dwelling-place more appropriate than a pure and spotless mind; or, according to *Gale's* version, “*animo casto et puro locum convenientiorem in terris non habet Deus.*” *Ibid.* p. 625.

SOCRATES AND JESUS

COMPARED.

[1803.]

Amicus Plato, amicus Socrates, sed magis amica Veritas (*Christiana*).

TO JOSHUA TOULMIN, D.D.

DEAR SIR,

MY having had for many years the happiness of your acquaintance and friendship, and particularly my having lately turned my thoughts to the subject of one of your valuable *Dissertations*, have led me to take the liberty to address to you the following *Essay*, chiefly as a testimonial, and one of the last that I shall be able to give, of my esteem for your general principles and character.

Having here much leisure, and having been led to look back to some writings of the ancients with which I was formerly much better acquainted than I am now, and among others the *Memorabilia of Xenophon* and *Plato's Account of Socrates*, it occurred to me to draw out an exhibition of his principles and conduct from the words of those two original writers; and this suggested the idea of drawing a comparison between him and Jesus. Knowing that you had published an excellent *Dissertation* on the same subject, I forebore to look into it till mine was transcribed for the press. By this means I was not biassed, as I naturally should have been, in favour of your opinion; and I have seldom more than a very indistinct recollection of any work that I have not very recently read. On this second perusal of your *Dissertation* I was as much pleased with it as I remember I was at the first, though I found that in some particulars I differ from you. I hope that neither of us, inattentive as most persons now are to subjects of this kind, will have wholly written in vain.

I take this opportunity of publicly thanking you for your many excellent publications in defence of rational Christianity. Having given so many specimens of your ability and zeal in the cause, it is to you, and your excellent coadjutors, Mr. Belsham, Mr. Kentish, and a few others, that the friends to the same cause will naturally look, whenever particular occasions, occurring on your side of the water, shall appear to call for a champion. My labours in this or any other field of exertion are nearly over; but it gives me much satisfaction to reflect on what I have done in defence of what appeared to me important Christian truth. As we have *laboured* I hope we shall hereafter *rejoice* together; but we must *hold out to the end*, without being *weary of well-doing*, indulging no remission of labour while we are capable of any. Even a dying hand has sometimes done execution. According to the apostle *Paul*, the whole life of every Christian is *a warfare*. Our enemies are *vice* and *error*, and with them we must make neither peace nor truce. Their advocates will not make either peace or truce with us.

I know I shall not offend you by acknowledging, as I now do, that I had a particular view to *you* in my late tract in favour of *Infant Baptism*.* Whatever you may think of the performance itself, you will not, I am confident, think uncandidly of the intention with which it was written. While we really think for ourselves, it is impossible, in this state at least, but that we must often see things in different lights, and consequently form different opinions concerning them. But with the ingenuous minds which become Christians this will only be an occasion of exercising that candour which is one of the most prominent Christian virtues, in which I am persuaded you will never be defective.

With a very high degree of esteem,

I am, dear Sir, yours sincerely,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Northumberland, Jan. 1803.

* "A Letter to an Antipædobaptist," 1802.

INTRODUCTION.

THE history of *Socrates* is so singular a phenomenon in the Heathen world, and his general behaviour, and the manner of life to which he devoted himself, have in them so much that resembles those of the ancient prophets, and even of our Saviour, that they have always drawn the particular attention of the friends of divine revelation, though these have formed very different opinions on the subject.

If we look into any account of the *Grecian* philosophers who preceded *Socrates*, or who followed him, (and some of the most eminent of the latter were his professed disciples,) we shall find none of them to resemble him, even in the general features of his conduct, though his education as a philosopher was in all respects the same with theirs; and they all fell far short of him with respect to purity of moral character.

If we may depend upon what is transmitted to us concerning him by *Xenophon* and *Plato*, who were his contemporaries and disciples, both men of great eminence, (and there were no writers in the Heathen world whose characters stand higher than theirs,) he was a very extraordinary man with respect both to wisdom and virtue. And as *Socrates* had enemies as well as friends, and his accusers must have had their friends too, had the accounts of *Xenophon* or *Plato* not been in the main agreeable to truth, it would have been in our power, (as the age abounded with writers,) to perceive some trace of their objections. But nothing of this kind appears.

From both these accounts we must conclude that *Socrates* was a man who, from early life, not only abstained from vice himself, and practised every thing that he thought to be a virtue, but one who devoted himself to the promoting of virtue in others; continually throwing himself in the way of every person whom he thought he could benefit by his exhortations or instructions; that by this means a considerable number of young men, especially those of the best families, of much consideration and wealth, in the city of *Athens*, were strongly attached to him; and yet, that though he was poor, and many of them were rich, he never accepted of any reward for his instructions.

In his conduct as a citizen he was most uncorrupt and fearless, risking his popularity, and even his life, rather than consent to any thing that appeared to him unjust. When

he was falsely accused, he behaved with the greatest magnanimity at his trial, and when sentence of death was passed upon him, he yielded to it with the greatest calmness. He refused to solicit for any abatement of the sentence, as a favour, and declined all the offers of his friends to assist him in an escape from prison. When the fatal cup was brought to him, he drank it with the greatest readiness and composure, and died with much apparent satisfaction.

The sentiments and principles of such a man as this, who lived in the most polished city of *Greece*, at a period the most distinguished for every thing that can contribute to fame, in arts, science, or policy, and yet the most addicted to idolatry of any city in *Greece*, certainly deserves to be investigated, and his conduct to be scrutinized; and this I shall endeavour to do in the best manner that the materials we are furnished with will enable me.

SECTION I.

Of the Polytheism and Idolatry of Socrates.

THAT *Socrates* was an idolater, or a worshipper of a multiplicity of gods, and such as were acknowledged by his countrymen, and that he conformed in all respects to the popular modes of worship, cannot be denied. "He sacrificed," says *Xenophon*, "both on the public altars of the city and often at his own house; and he also practised divination in the most public manner."* On trial he said, "he had never sacrificed to, or acknowledged, or sworn by, or even made mention of, any gods but Jupiter, Juno, and others that were received by his fellow-citizens."† "Do not I believe," says he, "that the sun, and the moon, are gods as well as others?"‡ "Do we not suppose demons" (and one of these he acknowledged to have given particular attention to him) "to be either gods, or the sons of gods?"§ And in his last moments, after he had drunk the poison, recollecting a vow that he had made to sacrifice a cock to *Æsculapius*, he desired *Crito*, a pupil and particular friend of his, to discharge it for him, and begged that he would not neglect to do it.|| Though on one occasion he speaks of *one God* that constructed and preserves the world,¶ he does not say that he was the *only God*.

* *Memorabilia*, Ed. 2, *Oxon.* 1749, p. 2. (P.) † *Ibid.* p. 377. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 3. (P.) § *Ibid.* p. 21. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 186. (P.) ¶ *Ibid.* p. 318. (P.)

All Heathens and idolaters, civilized or uncivilized, were addicted to *divination*, imagining that by this means they could pry into futurity, and find out what their gods signified by certain signs, as the flight of birds, the form of the livers of the animals they sacrificed, and many other things, which are generally considered as accidents. *Socrates* was so far from seeing the folly of these observances, that he was to an immoderate degree assiduous in his attention to them. Being of opinion, that “the gods signified their will by divination to those whom they were disposed to favour.”* Whenever he was in doubt about any thing of importance, he sent some of his friends to consult the oracle,† and he advised his friends, if they had occasion for the knowledge of any thing that they could not attain to, themselves, to apply to the gods in the modes of divination;‡ saying, that “they who would regulate either their own affairs, or those of the state, stood in need of these practices.”§

Besides having recourse to the usual modes of divination, *Socrates* believed that, upon every occasion of importance, the will of the gods was signified to himself in particular, but in what manner he does not clearly say. He sometimes calls it a *voice* (*φωνή*). At his trial he said he had often been heard to say that a divine voice was frequently present with him.

Notwithstanding all this evidence of the polytheistic sentiments and corresponding practice of *Socrates*, *Rollin* and others suppose him to have been a believer in the *Divine Unity*, and to have been sensible of the absurdity and folly of all the popular superstitions, and of the popular worship of his country. But I am far from seeing any sufficient evidence of this. If he had had the weakness, which, however, is never ascribed to him, to conceal this before his judges, he might have avowed it before his death, bearing a dying and most honourable testimony to important truth; whereas, on both these occasions, his language and conduct were the very reverse of what, on the supposition of this superior knowledge, they ought to have been. Indeed I much question whether any person educated as *Socrates* was, among polytheists and idolaters, could possibly, by the mere light of nature, have attained to a firm belief of the *Divine Unity*, though he might in some degree have been sensible of the folly and absurdity of the prevailing superstitions.

* *Memorabilia*, p. 8. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 352. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 5. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 5. (P.)

SECTION II.

The Sentiments of Socrates concerning the Gods and their Providence.

A POLYTHEIST and idolater as *Socrates* was, he had just and honourable sentiments concerning the divine power and providence, and of the obedience that men owe to the gods; and though his ideas on these subjects are far short of what we find in the *Psalms of David* and the writings of the *Hebrew* prophets, they are much more rational and sublime than the opinions of the Heathens in general, or those of the philosophers that followed him.

We have seen that *Socrates* ascribed to a *god* the formation and government of the world; whereas, according to *Hesiod*, (whose *Theogony* was, no doubt, that which was generally received by the *Greeks*,) the world had been from eternity, and the origin of the gods was subsequent to it. *Socrates* points out in particular the wisdom and goodness of Providence in the disposition of the different senses and the several parts of the human body, as that of the eyes, the eye-lashes and eye-lids; and in the structure of the teeth, which, in the different animals, are shaped and situated in the most convenient manner, the best adapted to their respective uses.* He had, no doubt, the same opinion of the wisdom and goodness displayed in the structure and disposition of every thing else in nature.

He, moreover, believed that the gods know every thing that is not only said or done, but that is even thought and intended, though ever so privately; being present in all places; so that, whenever they think proper, they can give intimations to man of every thing relating to them.† “The Deity,” (το Θεῖον,) he says, “sees and hears all things, is every where present, and takes care of all things.”‡ And he makes this obvious and practical use of the doctrine, viz. that “if men believed it, they would abstain from all base actions even in private, persuaded that nothing that they did was unknown to the gods.”§

The gods, he also thought, know every thing that is future, though they conceal the knowledge of those things from men in general; so that, “though a man built a house, he could not be certain that he should inhabit it, nor could

* *Memorabilia*, p. 62. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 65. (P.)

Ibid. p. 14. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 70 (P.)

a general be sure whether it would be proper for him to march his army.”* Agreeably to this, it was his custom, in his prayer to the gods, to request that they would grant him what was good, without specifying what he wished for; since they best knew what was so.† Like the Heathens in general, he considered lightning as coming more immediately from the gods, as one mode of giving intimations to men.‡

According to *Socrates*, it is the gods that have made the distinction between men and the inferior animals, having given them rational souls, so that they only know that there are gods, and can worship them. “There is no such principle and excellent quality,” he said, “in the brutes; and, in consequence of this superiority, men are like gods with respect to other animals.”§

Speaking of the goodness of the gods to man, he says, “They supply us not only with necessities, but with things that are adapted to give us pleasure.”|| He mentions particularly as their gifts, water and fire, the grateful and useful change of the seasons, and our various senses, adapted to peculiar species of good. “This,” he says, “shews their concern for us.”¶

Socrates considered all unwritten laws obligatory on man in society, the origin of which cannot be traced, as having the gods for their authors. Among these he mentions the universal maxims, that the gods ought to be worshipped,** that gratitude is due to benefactors, that parents ought not to have sexual commerce with their children, and all other universally acknowledged principles of morality.

In answer to the objection from our not seeing the gods, he mentions several things in nature, the existence and powers of which cannot be denied, and which are invisible or inscrutable by us, as lightning, the wind, and the intellectual powers of man; “Thus,” says he, “when we see the powers of the gods, we must reverence them, though we do not see them.”††

Nothing can exceed the respect that *Socrates* entertained for the authority and will of the gods, whenever and in whatever manner it was made known. “If,” says he, “the gods signify their will, we must no more depart from it and take other counsel, than we should prefer the conduct of a blind man, who did not know the road, to that of one who

* *Memorabilia*, p. 6. (P.) † *Ibid.* p. 45. (P.) ‡ *Ibid.* p. 312. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 66. (P.) || *Ibid.* p. 306. (P.) ¶ *Ibid.* p. 310. (P.)

** *Ibid.* p. 327. (P.) †† *Ibid.* p. 313. (P.)

saw it and knew it; always preferring the direction of the gods to that of men.”*

Agreeable to this, when he was addressing his judges, he said, that “if they would acquit him on condition that he would discontinue his instructions to young persons, which he believed the gods had enjoined him, or suffer death, he would answer that he must obey God rather than man; and that, if they should banish him to any other country, he should think it his duty to do there what he had done at Athens.”† “Whatever be the situation in which a man is placed, there,” he said, “he should remain at any risk, even of life, dreading baseness more than any thing else. So the gods having, as I believe, placed me where I have been, and ordered me to remain philosophizing and scrutinizing myself and others, I must not desert that station, for fear of death or any thing else.”‡

When *Aristodemus*, with whom he was discoursing on this subject, said, that he did not deny that there were gods, but he thought they were too great to stand in need of his worship, *Socrates* replied, that the greater they were the more they were to be honoured.§

As to the manner in which the gods were to be honoured, he, like other Heathens, thought it was to be determined by the laws of every particular country; but he justly thought that the satisfaction the gods received from these marks of respect did not depend upon the costliness of the sacrifice. “The offering of a poor man,” he said, “is as acceptable to the gods as the more expensive ones of the rich.”||

SECTION III.

Of the excellent Moral Character of Socrates.

THESE, it cannot be denied, are excellent sentiments, and much to be admired, considering the little light that *Socrates* had, viz. that of nature only, uninstructed by any revelation; and with him these sentiments were not merely speculative. His whole life seems to have been strictly conformable to them, being eminently virtuous, and wholly devoted to the service of his fellow-citizens.

Xenophon, who knew him well, (though, having been his pupil, we may suppose him to have been prejudiced in his

* *Memorabilia*, p. 51. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 23. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 40. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 64. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 49. (P.)

favour,) gives the following general account of his character and conduct: "He was so religious that he did nothing without the advice of the gods. He was so just, that he never injured any person in the smallest matter, but rendered every service in his power to those with whom he had any connexion. He was so temperate, that he never preferred what was grateful to what was useful. He was so prudent, that he never mistook the worse for the better; nor did he want the advice of others, but always judged for himself. In his conversation, he excelled in defining what was right, and in shewing it to others, reproving the vicious, and exhorting to the practice of virtue."*

Though the circumstances of *Socrates* were the reverse of affluent, he would never receive any gratuity for the lessons that he gave, as all other philosophers and public teachers did; and by this means, as he said, he preserved his freedom and independence.† When upon his trial, he was urged by his friends to supplicate the judges, as was the universal custom, in order to move their compassion, he refused to ask any favour even of them; being of opinion that this was contrary to the *laws*, according to which, and not according to *favour*, judges ought to decide.‡

In all the changes in the political state of the turbulent city of *Athens*, which were many in the time of *Socrates*, he adhered inflexibly to what he thought to be just, without being influenced by hope or fear. This was particularly conspicuous on two occasions: the first was, when, being one of the judges in the case of the ten generals who were tried for their lives on account of their not collecting and burying the dead after a naval engagement, and all the rest (influenced, no doubt, by the popular clamour against them) condemned them to die, he alone refused to concur in the sentence. Soon after, the citizens in general, convinced of the injustice of the sentence, though after it had been carried into execution, approved of his conduct. The other was during the government of the thirty tyrants, when, though in manifest danger of his life, he refused to approve of their measures; and he escaped by nothing but their overthrow and the city recovering its liberty.

That *Socrates*, at the close of life, expressed his satisfaction in his own conduct, cannot be thought extraordinary. It was, he observed, in concurrence with the general opinion

* *Memorabilia*, p. 359. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 74. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 317. (P.)

of his countrymen, and with a declaration of the oracle at *Delphi* in his favour.* For, when it was consulted by *Chærephon*, one of his disciples, the answer was, that there was no person more honourable, (*ελευθεροτερον*), more just, or more wise † than he.

He put, however, a very modest construction on this oracle; which was, that, though he knew no more than other men, he did not, like them, pretend to know more; so that he only knew himself and his own ignorance better than other men.‡ His reputation in consequence of it, and of his conduct in general, had no other than the happiest influence upon him. For, addressing his judges, he observed, that “it being a generally-received opinion, that he was wiser than other men,” he said that, “whether that opinion was well-founded or not, he thought he ought not to demean himself by any unworthy action.”§

Notwithstanding *Socrates's* consciousness of integrity and general merit, and the good opinion of the wise and virtuous, he was so sensible of the malice of his enemies, that, when he was brought before his judges, he had no expectation of being acquitted, and therefore, he expressed his surprise when he found that he was condemned by a majority of no more than three votes out of 500.||

It being customary at *Athens*, when any person was found guilty of the charge brought against him, to require him to say what, in his own opinion, his punishment should be; and this question being proposed to *Socrates*, conscious as he was of no demerit, but, on the contrary, of his valuable services to his country, he said, that since he had made no gain by his profession of public instructor, had never held any lucrative office in the state, and he was poor, he was, like other persons in a similar situation, and with similar claims, entitled to a maintenance at the public expense in the *Prytaneum*.¶ If they destroyed him, he farther said, they would not soon find another like him.** This has the appearance of vanity and ostentation; but if the praising a man's self be at all justifiable, it is on such an occasion as this, when he is unjustly censured and condemned by others.

* *Memorabilia*, p. 366. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 371. In *Xenophon* the response of the oracle is expressed by *σοφρονηςερον*, but *Plato* always uses the word *σοφωτατος*. *Cicero*, in referring to it, uses the word *sapientissimus*. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* pp. 9, 12. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 34. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 36. This, exclusive of the president, *Rollin* supposes to have been the number of the judges. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* p. 37. (P.)

** *Ibid.* p. 27. (P.)

SECTION IV.

The Imperfection of Socrates's Ideas concerning Piety, and Virtue in general.

JUST and sublime as were the sentiments that *Socrates* professed concerning the power and providence of the gods, and of the obligation that men are under to reverence and worship them, his ideas of the *manner* in which this was to be done, were by no means such as might have been expected in consequence of them. According to him, all the duties that properly rank under the head of *piety*, are the observance of the religious rites of the countries in which men live. "The gods," he says, "are not to be honoured by every man as he pleases, but as the laws direct."* This was agreeable to the answer received from *Delphi*, when inquiry was made concerning the manner in which men should please the gods; for the answer returned was, "by complying with the institutions of our country."† After mentioning this, *Socrates* added, that "all states had decreed that the gods are to be placated by sacrifices, according to the faculties of each of them."‡

Now, what the rites of the Heathen religion were, those of *Athens* by no means excepted, is well known. Little did they accord with any just sentiments of what we now deem to be *piety*, that is, a reverence for the perfections and providence of God, gratitude for his favours, submission to his will, in a strict obedience to the moral precepts he has enjoined, and confidence in his protection and favour, in consequence of it. With these sentiments, sacrifices, and the other rites of the Heathen religions, had no connexion whatever; rather, they were the occasion and provocatives of licentiousness and lewdness, as must have been well known to *Socrates* himself.

The moral maxims of *Socrates*, independent of those relating to religion, are admirable, especially his saying, that "there is no better way to true glory than to endeavour to be good rather than seem to be so."§ But his general rule concerning the nature of *justice*, in which he probably included virtue in general, was, that "whatever is *lawful*," or agreeable to the laws, "is just;"|| whereas, nothing can

* *Memorabilia*, p. 338. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 311. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* pp. 321, 326. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 313. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 83. (P.)

be more variable than the laws of particular states, or more discordant with one another.

With respect to the subjects of religion and morals in general, *Socrates* always professed a greater regard to the laws than reason or good sense will justify, though he might be induced to say more on this subject in consequence of his being accused of being no friend to the popular religion, and of corrupting youth by attaching them to himself, to the neglect of their parents and others. And it is very possible that, in some of his instructions, he had inculcated duties of a purer and higher kind than the institutions of his country would encourage or authorize. Such, however, might be expected from the sentiments he generally expressed.

Considering the wretched philosophy of the *Sophists*, whose ostentation and absurdities *Socrates* exposed, we shall not wonder at the advice he gave his hearers with respect to the principal object of their pretended science. He recommended to them the study of *geography*, *astronomy*, and the sciences in general, only so far as they were of practical use in life; but he particularly dissuaded them from the study of *the structure of the universe*, because, he said, "it was not designed to be discovered by man, nor could it be agreeable to the gods to have that inquired into which they did not make known to man."* For, nothing could be more presumptuous than the manner in which those *Sophists*, and the philosophers of those times in general, decided concerning this great subject; and with them it led to nothing of any real value with respect to men's conduct, but puffed them up with conceit, without any foundation of real knowledge. On this account, he is said by *Seneca* to have reduced all philosophy to morals.†

But could *Socrates* have seen the progress that a truer philosophy than any that existed in his time has now made, and how directly it leads to the most profound admiration of the works and providence of God, unfolding the wisdom, power, and goodness of the great Creator; and had he seen the connexion which this reverence for God, and, consequently, for his laws, has (on the system of revelation) with moral virtue, he would have been the first to lay stress upon it, and to inculcate it upon his pupils.

As the laws of his country, which, with *Socrates*, were too

* *Memorabilia*, p. 350. (P.)

† "Totam philosophiam revocavit ad mores." *Epist.* 71. (P.)

much the standard of right, with respect both to religion and morals, were very imperfect on many subjects, we do not wonder that he did not express a sufficient indignation (such as those do who are acquainted with the purer and more severe precepts of revealed religion relating to them) at some particular vices, especially sodomy, which the laws of God by *Moses* justly punished with death.

When *Critias*, then his pupil, was in love with *Euthydemus*, and avowedly, as it should seem, for the vilest purpose, he dissuaded him from pursuing his object ; but only as a thing that was illiberal, unbecoming a man of honour and delicacy. "It was," he said, "begging of the object of his passion like a pauper, and for a thing that would do him no good."* The gratification of this passion, he said, resembled a hog rubbing himself against a stone.† This, no doubt, shews a *contempt* for this vice, but no sufficient *abhorrence* of it, as such a degradation of human nature ought to excite. When another of his pupils gave a kiss to a son of *Alcibiades*, who was very beautiful, he only asked, whether it did not require great boldness to do it ; meaning that, after this, it would not be easy to refrain from endeavouring to take greater liberties with him. There is too much of pleasantry, and too little of seriousness, in this method of considering the subject.

A similar remark may be made on the interview that *Socrates* had with a celebrated courtesan, of the name of *Theodota*, whom he had the curiosity to visit on account of what he had heard of her extraordinary beauty and elegant form, so that statuaries applied to her to take models from her ; and to whom the historian says she exhibited her person as much as decency would permit. In this situation, *Socrates* and his pupils found her ; but in the conversation that he had with her he discovered no just sense of the impropriety of her life and profession. She spake to him of her gallants as her friends, who contributed to her support without labour, and hoped that by his recommendation she should procure more ; adding, "How shall I persuade you to this ?" He replies, "This you must find out yourself, and consider in what way it may be in my power to be of any use to you." And when she desired him to come often to see her, he only jestingly said, that he was not sufficiently at leisure from other engagements.‡ Ready as *Socrates* was to give good advice to young men, he said nothing to her to

* *Memorabilia*, p. 29. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 30. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 251. (P.)

recommend a more virtuous and reputable course of life than that which he knew she led.

It was not in this manner that *Jesus* and his apostles would have conversed with such a person. He did not decline all intercourse with women of her character, but it was not at their houses ; and what he said was intended to instruct and reclaim them. He considered them as the *sick*, and himself as the *physician*.

Women of the profession of this *Theodota*, if they had been well educated, were resorted to in the most open manner by men of the first character at *Athens*, as *Aspasia* by *Socrates* himself, and by *Pericles*, who afterwards married her. Nor was fornication in general, with women of that profession, at all disreputable, either in *Greece* or at *Rome*.

How much more pure are the morals of Christianity in this respect ! So great, however, was the prevalence of this vice, and so little had it been considered as one, in the Heathen world, that the apostle *Paul*, writing to the Christian churches in *Greece*, and especially at *Corinth*, the richest and most voluptuous city in that part of the world, is urgent to dissuade his converts from it. See particularly 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10, where, among those who would be excluded from the kingdom of heaven, he mentions fornicators in the first place : “ Know ye not, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God ? Be not deceived ; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”

SECTION V.

Of Socrates's Belief in a Future State.

THOUGH *Socrates* had more just ideas concerning the nature and character of Deity, and also of the nature and obligations of virtue, than the generality of his countrymen, and even of the philosophers, he does not appear to have had any more knowledge than others concerning the great sanction of virtue, in the *doctrine of a future state*. In none of his conversations recorded by *Xenophon*, on the subject of virtue, with young men and others, is there the least mention of it, or allusion to it ; which was certainly unavoidable, if he had been really acquainted with it and believed it.

Speaking of the happiness of his virtuous pupils, he men-

tions the pleasure they would have in this life, and the respect that would be paid to them ; and says that, “ when they died they would not be without honour, consigned to oblivion, but would be for ever celebrated.”* Having said this, could he have forbore to add their happier condition after death, if he had had any belief of it ?

All his dissuasives from vice are grounded on some natural and necessary inconvenience to which men expose themselves by it in this life, but none of them have any respect to another. Thus he represents intemperate persons as slaves to their appetites;† and, treating of what he considered as being the laws of nature, and therefore as those of the gods, as the prohibition of marriage between parents and their children, he only says, that “ the offspring of such a mixture is bad, one of the parties being too old to produce healthy children;”‡ and this reason does not apply to the case of brothers and sisters. Another law of nature, he says, is to do good in return for good received ; but the penalty of not doing it he makes to be nothing more than being deserted by a man’s friends when he will have the most want of them, and to be forced to apply to those who have no friendship for him. §

It is particularly remarkable that nothing that *Xenophon* says as coming from *Socrates*, not only in his conversations with his pupils, but even at his trial, and the scenes before his death, implies a belief of a future state. All that we have of this kind is from *Plato* ; and though he was present at the trial, and therefore what he says is, no doubt, entitled to a considerable degree of credit, it wants the attestation of *another witness* ; and the want of that of *Xenophon* is something more than *negative* ; especially as it is well known that *Plato* did not scruple to put into the mouth of *Socrates*, language and sentiments that never fell from him, as it is said *Socrates* himself observed when he was shewn the dialogue entitled *Lysis*, in which he is the principal speaker, as he is in many others.

In *Plato’s* celebrated dialogue entitled *Phædon*, in which he makes *Socrates* advance arguments in proof of a future state, we want the evidence of some person who was present ; for *Plato* himself was at that time confined by sickness,|| so that it is very possible, as nothing is said of it by

* *Memorabilia*, p. 111. (P.) † *Ibid.* p. 322. (P.) ‡ *Ibid.* p. 628. (P.)
§ *Ibid.* p. 329. (P.)

|| *De Rebus divinis*, Ed. 2, Cantab, 1663, p. 74. (P.)

Xenophon, that he might not have held any discourse on the subject at all.

Besides, all that *Socrates* is represented by *Plato* to have said on this subject is far from amounting to any thing like certain *knowledge* and real *belief* with respect to it, such as appears in the discourses of *Jesus*, and the writings of the apostles. *Socrates*, according to *Plato*, generally speaks of a future state, and the condition of men in it, as the *popular belief*, which might be true or false. "If," says he, "what is said be true, we shall in another state die no more."* "In death," he says to his judges, "we either lose all sense of things, or, as it is said, go into some other place; and if so, it will be much better; as we shall be out of the power of partial judges, and come before those that are impartial; Minos, Rhadamanthus, Æacus, Triptolemus, and others, who were demigods."† Taking his leave of them, he says, "I must now depart to die, while you continue in life; but which of these is better, the gods only can tell; for in my opinion no man can know this."

This certainly implies no faith on which to ground real practice, from which a man could, with the apostle, *live as seeing things invisible*, being governed by a regard to them more than to things present, the one as certain as the other, and infinitely superior in value, *the things that are seen being temporary, while those that are unseen are eternal*. (2 Cor. iv. 18.)

Notwithstanding this uncertainty of *Socrates* with respect to a future state, he died with great composure and dignity; considering his death at that time as, on the whole, better for him than to live any longer in the circumstances in which, at his time of life, (being seventy years old,) he must have lived; especially as a coward, discovering unmanly dread of death, in exile and disgrace; dying also without torture, surrounded by his friends and admirers, who would ensure his fame to the latest posterity.

That such *arguments* in proof of a future state as *Plato* puts into the mouth of *Socrates* should really have been advanced, and have any stress laid upon them, by him, in so serious a time as just before his death, is exceedingly improbable, from the extreme futility of them. They are more like the mere play of imagination, than the deductions of reason.

His first argument is, that as every thing else in nature

* *De Rebus divinis*, p. 46. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 44. (P.)

has its contrary, *death* must have it also, and if so, it must be followed by *life*, as day follows night, and a state of *vigilance* always follows *sleep*.* But might it not be said that, for the same reason, every thing that is *bitter* must, some time or other, become *sweet*, and every thing that is sweet become bitter?

His second argument is, that all our present acquired knowledge is only the recollection of what we knew before in a former state.† But what evidence is there of this?

His third argument is, that only compound substances are liable to corruption, by a separation of the parts of which they consist; but the mind is a simple substance, and therefore cannot be affected by the dissolution of the body in death.‡

This is certainly the most plausible argument of the three, but it is of too subtle a nature to give much satisfaction. If the mind have several powers and affections, and be furnished with a multiplicity of ideas, there is the same evidence of its being a compound as there is with respect to the body; and if the power of thinking, or *mental action*, bear any resemblance to corporeal *motion*, it may cease, and be suspended, though the substance remain.

Are these sufficient arguments for a man at the point of death to build his faith and hope upon? As this appears to have been all that the most sagacious of the Heathens could attain to by the light of nature, what reason have we to be thankful for the superior light of revelation, and especially for the gospel, which *brings life and immortality to light!* (2 Tim. i. 10.)

Socrates does not, in this celebrated dialogue, make any mention of the argument from the *universal belief* of a future state, as handed down by *tradition* in all nations; which, though far short of a proper *proof* of the doctrine, is more plausible than any of the three arguments above-mentioned; for it might be presumed that the ancestors of the human race, from whom the tradition descended to their posterity, had some proper evidence of what they delivered, though that had not been preserved, the doctrine itself only being retained. This, indeed, seems to have been the case with respect to the *Jews*. Though they were in the time of our Saviour firm believers in the doctrine of a resurrection, the record of the revelation (for it could not have come from any other source) had been long lost.

* *De Rebus divinis*, p. 56. (P.)

† *Ibid.* p. 100. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* p. 111. (P.)

How far short is every thing that *Socrates* is represented as saying, of the perfect assurance with which *Jesus* always spoke of the resurrection to an immortal life, and of the glory that was prepared for him in the counsels of God, from the foundation of the world; when, as the writer of the epistle to the *Hebrews* says, (*Ch. xii. 2.*) “for the joy that was set before him,” he “endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God”! How short it falls of the confidence which the apostle *Paul*, in the near view of death, expresses with respect to his future prospects (*2 Tim. iv. 7.*): “I have fought *the* good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, *will* give me at that day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing.” With what satisfaction and joy have thousands of Christian martyrs relinquished this life, in the assurance of a better!

Besides, after all that *Socrates* advances in proof of a future state, he seems to make it the peculiar privilege of those who apply to philosophy, who have in some degree abstracted the purer mind from the gross body, by intense meditation.* “This,” he says, “was intended by the authors of the *mysteries* when they said that none besides the *initiated* would live with the gods after death; for that by the initiated were meant those who philosophized in a right manner (*ορθῶς*), and that whether he had succeeded or not, it had been his endeavour through life to do so.”†

According to this, the great mass of mankind have no more interest in a future state than brute animals.‡ But the gospel makes no difference in favour of philosophers, or any other class of men. According to this, (*John v. 28, 29.*) “all that are in the graves shall hear *the voice of the Son of Man*, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of *condemnation*.” Then, too, (*Rev. xx. 13.*) *the sea shall give up the dead that are in it, and every man shall be judged according to his works.*

* *Plato, (De Rebus divinis,) p. 83. (P.)*

† *Ibid. p. 94. (P.)*

‡ “With respect to the bulk of mankind, whether good or bad, *Socrates* held the transmigration of souls, with this only difference, that bad and vicious men, after having hovered awhile disconsolate about the sepulchres, pass into the bodies of animals of like dispositions with their own, wolves, kites, foxes, asses, &c. But the common sort of good men, who had exercised justice and temperance, go into the bodies of animals of a more gentle and civil kind, or return into human bodies, such as they had before.” *Leland, C. R. II. p. 508.*

SECTION VI.

Of the Dæmon of Socrates.

MUCH has been advanced on the subject of the *dæmon*, as it is commonly called, of *Socrates*, or that *divine voice*, as he termed it, which gave him warnings about what he was about to do, if it was improper for him, and which was evidently something different from *divination*, to which he often had recourse, or from any casual *omen* that might occur to him. This, he said, had accompanied him from his youth; but, though it forbade him to do certain things that he was deliberating about, it had never prompted him to any particular action. This divine voice did not respect his own conduct only, but sometimes that of others; and he declared that whenever he had, from this warning, signified the will of the gods to any of his friends, he had never been deceived by it.*

Speaking of his general manner of life and plan of conduct, in devoting his time and talents to the instruction of others, he said it had been enjoined him "by the gods, by oracles, by the god," (probably meaning that particular deity from whom he had the hints above-mentioned,) "by dreams, and every other mode in which, by divination, they order things to be done."† This was said by him in his address to his judges; and he added that, "though the deity had checked him in the smallest things that he was about to do, if they were improper, yet that when he was thinking of his defence, the deity had thus forbidden him to make any, and this not only once, but twice, nor while he was then speaking did he perceive any check with respect to any part of his conduct."‡ He therefore concluded that, since this divine voice had not interfered on this occasion, it was best for him to await the sentence of his judges, though they should condemn him to death. "The situation I am now in," he said, "did not come to me by chance; for nothing can happen amiss to a good man, with respect to life or death; since the gods never neglect him. It is, therefore, better for me to die now, and to be exempt from all farther labours."§

These intimations, in whatever manner they were com-

* *Plato, (De Rebus divinis,) p. 370. (P.)* † *Ibid. p. 32. (P.)*

‡ *Ibid. pp. 44, 365. (P.)* § *Ibid. p. 47. (P.)*

municated, are now, I believe, generally thought to have been a mere *illusion*, when nothing really supernatural took place. Had these suggestions occurred only once or twice in the course of his life, the *hypothesis* of their being an illusion, or mere imagination, might have been admitted; but they had attended him, he said, from his youth, and had given him hints not only respecting his own conduct, (which, by his account, had been very frequent,) but sometimes that of his friends; and because he had received no check from this quarter with respect to his conduct at his trial, he concluded with certainty that it was right, and would have the best issue.

Besides the admonitions of this kind which were communicated while he was awake, he had others, he says, given him in dreams. One of these he mentioned just before his death; which was, that he should apply to music. On this he had put various constructions; and lest he should not have hit upon the true meaning of it, he composed while he was in prison, a hymn in praise of *Apollo*, and turned some of the fables of *Æsop* into verse, which were always recited in a musical recitative.*

This might have been nothing more than a common dream, on which he put an uncommon construction, in consequence of imagining that there was something supernatural in it. But this could not have been the case with respect to the hints that he received when he was awake, whether by the medium of a real voice, or in any other way.

In no other respect does *Socrates* appear to have been an enthusiast. On the contrary, he was a man of a calm and even temper, not distinguished by any peculiarity of behaviour, or extravagance of any kind; and though he seems to have addressed himself to every person to whom he imagined that his advice would be useful, he was never charged with being impertinent, so as to give offence to any. On the contrary, his address was insinuating and pleasing; so that his hearers in general were delighted with his conversation, and this through the course of a long life.

Since, then, he persisted in his account of these admonitions to the last, and in the most serious situation that a man could be in, and his veracity was never questioned, though I am far from forming any fixed opinion on a sub-

* *Plato, (De Rebus divinis,) p. 77. (P.)*

ject of so great obscurity, I think it may admit of a doubt, whether they may not be supposed to have come, in whatever manner they were given, from God. I do not see any thing unworthy of the Divine Being in his distinguishing this extraordinary man in this way. Being no judge of the propriety of the Divine conduct, we must be determined in every case of this kind by the *evidence of facts*, according to the established rules of estimating the value of testimony in general.

These admonitions are said to have been proper to the occasions on which they were delivered ; so that leading to *good*, if they came from any superior being, it must have been a wise and benevolent one. They would, therefore, tend to impress the mind of Socrates, and those of his numerous disciples and admirers, with an idea of the existence of a power superior to man, though not in a manner so decisive and convincing as the express revelations that were made to the *Hebrew* prophets. But why it should please God to distinguish any one man, or any particular nation, with his peculiar gifts, and in what degree he should do this, is not for us to say. If we see good to result from it, we ought not to cavil or complain, but be satisfied and thankful.

That in any manner whatever, and in what degree soever, it shall appear that the Maker of the world gives attention to it, it is a proof of the reality of a *providence* in general, and of the Divine interference out of the usual course of the laws of nature. It is, therefore, a decisive proof of a great and important truth ; and if he be not such a god as *Epicurus* and other philosophers supposed, one who (whether he had created the world or not) sat a perfectly unconcerned spectator of all that passed in it, but really interested himself in the affairs of men by occasional interpositions, it cannot be doubted but that, from the same principle, he does it at all times, though in a manner less apparent ; and that his final treatment of men will be according to his proper character, whatever that be ; if he be a righteous and good being, he will, no doubt, most approve of virtue and goodness in men, and shew it by rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked.

The reason why he does not do this completely at present, though we are not without some intimations of his *disposition* to do so, it is not difficult to account for. There must be time and opportunity to form characters. The existence of vice, as well as of virtue, in the world, is necessary for this purpose ; and it is not till a character be properly formed

that a suitable treatment can be adjusted to it. If our Maker think of us at all, it must be for our good.

Thus do such supernatural suggestions as Socrates asserts that he had, afford some obscure and indistinct evidence of a *moral government of the world*, and consequently of a future state of righteous retribution. Why such intimations were not more frequent, more distinct, or more general, is beyond our comprehension. If we be asked, why the wise and benevolent Author of nature permitted the rise and long continuance of the most absurd and abominable systems of polytheism and idolatry, to prevail so long in the world, or why he should suffer so much vice and misery to exist in it at present; why mankind should be afflicted with war, pestilence and famine, and be subject to such distressful accidents as lightning, hurricanes and earthquakes, we can only say with *Abraham* of old, (*Gen. xviii. 25.*) that the *Maker and Judge of the earth will do what is right*; and therefore that all these evils, repugnant as they seem to our ideas of benevolence, may hereafter appear to have been the best methods of promoting general and lasting happiness.

If the present state be considered as nothing more than the *infancy* of our being, we may naturally expect to be no more able to account for our treatment in it, than a child is able to account for that of its parent, who, though ever so affectionate, must, if he be wise, continually do what the child cannot see any reason for, and what he must think to be very often exceedingly harsh and unreasonable. And as appearances in nature, and in the structure of the world, furnish an unquestionable proof of a wise and benevolent author, the present imperfect state of virtue and happiness does, as such, afford some evidence that this is the infant state of our being; and is therefore an argument, and a promise, as we may say, of future good. And slight as it may be, and less satisfactory than we could wish, it should be highly grateful and acceptable to us.

SECTION VII.

Of the Character and Teaching of Socrates, compared with those of Jesus.

WHEN we consider what was most obvious in the general disposition and behaviour of *Socrates* and of *Jesus*, we see no apparent difference with respect to the command of their natural appetites and passions, or their temper in general.

Both were equally temperate, though as Jesus was not married, and was never charged with incontinence, he shewed a command of his natural passions in this respect for which there was no occasion in the case of Socrates. Both of these men seem to have been equally free from austerity and moroseness in their general behaviour, being equally affable, and no enemies to innocent festivity on proper occasions.

They were both capable of strong personal attachments, as *Socrates* to several of his friends and pupils, and *Jesus* to the family of *Lazarus*, to his apostles in general, and to *John* in particular. And his discourses and prayer before his death shew his affection for them in the strongest manner. Also his attention to his mother, while he hung upon the cross, deserves particular notice in this respect.

Both of them were the friends of virtue, and laboured to promote it ; but *Jesus* expressed stronger indignation against vice, especially the vices of the great, and of the leading men of his country, against whose pride, hypocrisy, and injustice, he pronounced the most vehement and provoking invectives ; whereas *Socrates* adopted the gentler method of irony and ridicule.

There was, I doubt not, great propriety, as well as ingenuity, in the ironical manner that *Socrates* is said to have very often used, in exposing the vices of particular persons ; and by this means he is said, and with great probability, to have made himself many bitter enemies. But there was certainly more of *dignity* in the direct and serious invectives of *Jesus*, such as his saying, (*Matt.* xxiii. 13, &c.) “ Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites,” &c. And let it not be forgotten that this was pronounced by the son of a carpenter, of only about thirty years of age, and publicly in the temple, where he was always attended by great multitudes of persons of all ranks, and that no reply was ever made to him on these occasions. He by this conduct made himself as many enemies as *Socrates*, but it was in a manner that shewed more courage.

Both *Jesus* and *Socrates* took advantage of present incidents, as hints for their instructive discourses ; but those of *Socrates* have the appearance of having been contrived before hand, while those to which *Jesus* alluded were such as naturally presented themselves at the time.

What was peculiar to *Socrates* was his proposing to his hearers a series of *questions*, by means of which he made the conclusions he wished to have drawn seem to be their own ; so that all objections were precluded. A great peculiarity

in the discourses of Jesus, though his manner was very various, and often authoritatively didactic, which that of Socrates never was, consisted in his numerous *parables*, the meaning of which, when he intended it to be so, was sufficiently obvious, and peculiarly striking; as in those of *the rich man and Lazarus*; of the man who was robbed, and nearly murdered, on his way to *Jericho*; and the peculiarly fine one of *the prodigal son*; and therefore more easily retained in memory, as well as adapted to make a stronger impression on the mind, than a moral lesson not so introduced and accompanied.

At other times there was an intended obscurity in the parables and sayings of Jesus. He did not always wish to be understood at the time, but to have what he said, remembered, and reflected upon afterwards. Such sayings were calculated to engage more attention from their being expressed in a concise, figurative and enigmatical manner; as when he said, (*John* ii. 19,) "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." Such a saying as this would not be forgotten. His enemies, we find, remembered it, and his friends would understand his meaning in due time; as they would his saying, (*John* xii. 32,) "If I be lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto me;" in which he alluded both to his crucifixion, his resurrection, and the universal spread of his gospel.

It is very remarkable that there are not in the most elaborate compositions of the ancients or moderns any parables so excellent for pertinency to the occasion on which they were delivered, for propriety and consistency in their parts, and for important meaning, as those of Jesus. Numerous as they are, they all appear to have been unpremeditated, as they arose from circumstances in which the speaker had no choice. There is nothing trifling or absurd in any of them; and few others, though the result of much study, are free from objections of this kind. It will not be supposed that the parables of Jesus received any improvement from the writers of his life, and yet the more they are studied the more admirable they are found to be.*

Both the discourses and the general manner of life of *Socrates* and *Jesus* have an obvious resemblance, as they both

* On this subject of parables, and every thing relating to the *internal evidences of Christianity*, I would particularly recommend a most comprehensive and excellent work of Mr. J. Simpson's, entitled, "Internal and Presumptive Evidences of Christianity considered separately, and as united to form one Argument," 1801. (P.)

went about graciously doing good, according to their several abilities, situations, and opportunities ; but we see an infinite superiority with respect to Jesus, though he had no such advantage of education and instruction as Socrates had.

Socrates had all the advantage that education, in the most polished city of *Greece*, and the most improved period of it, could give him ; having been enabled by the generosity of a wealthy citizen to attend the lectures of all the celebrated masters of his time, in every branch of science then known : and with respect to natural capacity, he was probably equal to Jesus, or any other man.

On the contrary, the circumstances of the parents of Jesus, and his low occupation till he appeared in public, exclude the supposition of his having had any advantage of liberal education. This, indeed, was objected to him by his adversaries. *John* vii. 15 : “ The Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned ? ” That is, how did he acquire so much knowledge, without being regularly instructed by the professed teachers of the law ?

Notwithstanding this great disadvantage, we find that, without any previous preparation that was visible, Jesus, from his very first appearance, assumed more authority, as a teacher and reprover of vice, than any other man before or since ; addressing himself to great multitudes, or single persons, the most eminent for their rank or knowledge, without the least embarrassment, and with an air of superiority to all men ; and yet without the appearance of any thing impertinent, ostentatious, or insulting.

Had *Socrates* introduced any of his instructions with *Verily, verily, I say unto you*, or any language of a similar import, he would have exposed himself to the ridicule of his audience, even in the latest period of his life, when he had acquired the greatest respect and authority. But this language was usual with Jesus from the very first ; as in his discourse on the Mount, when, instead of being insulted, he by this very means excited the greater veneration and attachment. For we read, (*Matt.* vii. 28,) “ It came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine ; for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”

How must any other man than Jesus have exposed himself to ridicule, if, when speaking of the *Ninevites* repenting at the preaching of *Jonah*, and of the Queen of *Sheba* coming from her own distant country to hear the wisdom of *Solomon*, he had added, as Jesus did, *but a greater than Jonah*,

and one *greater than Solomon, is here!* (*Matt.* xii. 41, 42.) But for any thing that appears he was heard with the greatest awe and respect. Infinitely more arrogant must it have appeared in any other man to say, as he did, after his resurrection, (*Matt.* xxviii. 18, 19,) “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.” No man but one who had actually risen from the dead, and who had before this, performed such miracles as convinced his hearers that he had a commission from God, could have used such language as this, and have been heard with acquiescence and respect.

To say nothing on the subject of miracles, to which *Socrates* did not pretend, (but the truth of which in the case of Jesus can alone account for the air of superior dignity and authority that he constantly assumed, as a messenger from God, and having his authority delegated to him,) his discourses relate to subjects of infinitely more importance than those of *Socrates*, the great object of them being to inculcate a purer and more sublime morality, respecting God and man, than any Heathen could have a just idea of, and urging his hearers in all their behaviour in this life to have a principal respect to another, which was to commence when he himself, after a painful death, to which he knew that he was destined, and his removal from the world, should return, invested with power to raise the dead, and to judge the world, when he would give to every man according to his works.

These are pretensions that no other man besides Jesus ever made; but with these ideas of his present power from God, and his future great destination, his conduct and his language, as a public teacher, corresponded; and his hearers, believing this, heard him with suitable reverence and respect.

What other man, to mention but one instance more, would not have exposed himself to ridicule by making such pretensions, and using such language, as the following? *John* xi. 25: “I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.” vi. 40: “This is the will of him that sent me, that every one *who* seeth the Son, and believeth on him, *shall* have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.” *Matt.* xxv. 31, 32: “When the Son of Man” (by which phrase he always meant himself) “shall come in his glory, and all his holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory; and before him *will* be gathered all nations, and he *will* separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats.”

The most astonishing proof of extraordinary authority assumed and exercised by Jesus, was his driving the buyers and sellers out of the outer court of the temple, at the time of a public festival, when that use had, of course, been made of it time immemorial, and with the permission of the rulers of the nation. This he did with only a whip of small cords to drive out the oxen and other cattle; when, as we read, (*Mark xi. 15, 17,*) “He overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves;—saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called the house of prayer *for* all nations? But ye have made it a den of thieves.” This was done without opposition, remonstrance, or delay.

When this was done, the Scribes and Pharisees asked him by what authority he had done it, and *who gave him that authority*; but they declining to answer a question that he put to them, he refused to give them any answer. We do not, I will venture to say, in all history, read of an act of authority equal to this by any private person, and a person without any relations or patrons conspicuous for wealth or power; and yet this bold, unauthorized action was never alleged against him as a breach of the peace, or produced against him at his trial. We only read, (*Mark xi. 18,*) that “the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him, because all the people were astonished at his doctrine.”

But independently of this superior *authority* with which Jesus always delivered himself, the *subjects* of his discourses and exhortations were far more serious and weighty than those of *Socrates*. Indeed, some of those that are recorded by *Xenophon* are so exceedingly trifling, that we cannot help wondering that a writer of such judgment and good sense should have thought it worth his while to relate them. Some of those of Jesus are, no doubt, of much less importance than others; as when he advises persons how to place themselves at table where there are many guests of different ranks, &c., and observations and advices of far less importance than even this are not unbecoming *Socrates*, *Jesus*, or any man in proper circumstances. For, the gravest characters are not always speaking, as we say, *ex cathedra*. In the ordinary situations of human life, when nothing very serious is expected, but mere good humour and good sense, even innocent pleasantry is well received.

But the great inferiority in all Heathens with respect to *knowledge*, especially concerning God, providence, and a

future state, made it absolutely impossible that the moral discourses of Socrates should have the clearness, the weight and importance of those of Jesus. The comparison of their discourses in this respect shews the great superiority of the system of religious truth that was familiar to all Jews, as contained in their sacred books, to any thing that was known to the most enlightened of the Heathens, among whom *Socrates* shines with a distinguished pre-eminence.

To resort once more to the conduct of *Socrates* and *Jesus*. *Socrates* behaved with great propriety and dignity at his trial; but it was by no means equal to the behaviour of *Jesus* in similar circumstances, though it is probable that he was wholly unacquainted with the forms and solemnity of courts of justice, especially those of the *Romans*, which would have thrown many persons entirely off their guard; whereas *Socrates* had himself sat as a judge in one of the most important criminal causes that was ever brought before any court of justice. But *Jesus* replied to the interrogations of *Pilate* the Roman governor, as well as to those of the *Jewish* high priest, with the greatest presence of mind, and the utmost propriety; having the prudence and self-command to make no answer at all to questions that were improper, and required none. This he did in a manner that astonished *Pilate* himself.

The readiness of *Jesus* to die after a hasty and most unjust condemnation, was certainly not less to be admired than that of *Socrates*, though the death of the latter was the easiest possible, and not in the least disreputable; being that to which the first citizens in the state, if sentenced to die, were brought: whereas that to which *Jesus* was sentenced was at the same time the most painful and the most ignominious.

Socrates had a very humane and compassionate person to administer the poison to him, shedding tears when he delivered it; and with great propriety *Socrates* spoke kindly to him on the occasion. But it is most probable that the Roman soldiers who nailed *Jesus* to the cross did that office as they generally did, without any feeling of compassion, and perhaps with mockery, as they had treated him before. And yet it is probable that at the very time when they were putting him to the greatest pain, he pronounced that admirable prayer in their favour, (*Luke* xxiii. 34,) "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do;" there being no particular guilt in their doing that office.*

* See Vol. XIII. p. 357.

Rousseau, though an unbeliever, was struck with the great difference between the cases of *Jesus* and *Socrates* in their last moments, and describes them in the following energetic manner : “ The death of *Socrates*, who breathed his last in philosophical conversation with his friends, is the mildest death that nature could desire ; while the death of *Jesus*, expiring in torment, injured, inhumanly treated, mocked, and cursed by an assembly of people, is the most horrible one that a mortal could apprehend. *Socrates*, while he takes the poisoned cup, gives his blessing to the person who presents it to him with the tenderest marks of sorrow ; *Jesus*, in the midst of his agonies, prays for his remorseless executioners. Yes ! if the life and death of *Socrates* carry the marks of a sage, the life and death of *Jesus* proclaim a God ! ”*

SECTION VIII.

Of the different Objects of the Instructions of Socrates and of Jesus.

THERE is a remarkable difference between the general conduct of *Jesus* and his *apostles*, and that of *Socrates* and the *Grecian philosophers* in general, with respect to the persons to whom they usually addressed their instructions. All the teaching of the latter was confined to persons of good condition, such as were likely to have influence in the important offices and concerns of the state ; but this was no particular object with *Jesus*. Though *Socrates*, unlike other philosophers, took no money for his instructions, his admonitions appear to have been confined to persons of the same class with the pupils of the others. There is not one of the dialogues in which he is the speaker, either in *Xenophon* or *Plato*, in which the common people are any part of the audience ; so that the great mass of citizens could not receive any benefit from his teaching.

On the other hand, the discourses of *Jesus* were addressed to persons of all ranks promiscuously, and generally to crowds

† “ La mort de Socrate philosopant tranquillement avec ses amis est la plus douce qu'on puisse desirer ; celle de Jésus expirant dans les tourmens, injurée, raillé, maudit de tout un peuple, est la plus horrible qu'on puisse craindre. Socrate prenant la coupe empoisonnée bénit celui qui la lui présente et qui pleure ; Jésus, au milieu d'un supplice affreux, prie pour ses bourreaux acharnés. Oui, si la vie et la mort de Socrate sont d'un sage, la vie et la mort de Jésus sont d'un Dieu.” *Profession de Foi du Vicaire Savoyard* in *Emile*, L. iv., *Œuvres de Rousseau*, 1792, XII. p. 154.

of the common people, though without excluding any, and rather selecting those of the lower classes, who were held in contempt by the learned Scribes and Pharisees, for his audience. He was commonly attended by great multitudes, of whom very few can be thought to have been what we call *persons of condition*, or who were likely to have any influence in public affairs, to which, indeed, his instructions had no relation whatever.

On two occasions, when crowds of this kind attended him, he fed them by a benevolent miracle; whereas, had they been opulent, they would, no doubt, have come sufficiently provided with every thing. We read, (*Mark* vi. 34,) that he "was moved with compassion *towards the multitude*, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." And again, (*Matt.* xv. 32,) he says, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they *have continued* with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way."

Sometimes persons of better condition, and of a higher rank, such as *Nicodemus*, applied to Jesus; but we never find that he sought their society, or first, in any manner, applied to them or any of the Scribes and Pharisees, who were the leading men in the country. Whereas *Socrates*, with the best views, no doubt, appears to have applied to no other. In this circumstance, however, we see a striking difference between these two teachers of virtue. The object of *Socrates* was the instruction of a *few*, but that of *Jesus*, of the *many*, and especially those of the middle and lower classes, as standing in most need of instruction, and most likely to receive it with gratitude and without prejudice.

The apostles, in this and in every thing else, followed the example of their Master, and addressed themselves to all classes of men without distinction, and without ever selecting the powerful, the rich, or the learned. To them, men of all descriptions were equal, as standing in the same relation to the common Parent of all mankind; equally training up by him in the same great school of moral discipline here, and alike *heirs of immortality* hereafter.

Thus the apostle *Paul* says, (1 *Cor.* xii. 13,) "We are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free." *Gal.* iii. 27, 28: "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in

Christ Jesus." *Col.* iii. 11: "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all and in all."* This is language suited to the equal nature, and equal rights of all men; but it was never held by the *Grecian philosophers*, nor did their conduct at all correspond to it. With them *barbarians*, and especially *slaves*, were of little account, any farther than they were qualified to serve them.†

Accordingly, we find that the schools of the *Grecian philosophers* were attended by none but persons of considerable rank and wealth. The lower order of the citizens took no interest in any thing that they taught, so that their morals could not be at all improved by them; but by the preaching of the *apostles*, a great and visible reformation was made among all ranks of men, and especially the lower, and of those some of the most depraved. Thus the apostle *Paul*, after observing what was quoted from him before, [p. 413,] concerning those who should not "inherit the kingdom of God," as *idolaters, adulterers, thieves, &c.* adds, "and such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God."‡ Many passages in the epistles of the apostles shew the wretched state with respect to morals, in which the gospel found men, and how much they were improved by it.

In none of the dialogues of *Socrates* do we find any *woman* to be present, except *Theodota*, the courtesan above-mentioned; [p. 412;] and though the domestic manners of the *Grecian* women of virtue and of condition were such as that they could not with decency attend public discourses, the middle and lower classes of women in Greece, as in all other countries, went abroad as openly as men, and, therefore, might have been in the way of instruction, had the common people in general been addressed by philosophers.

But Christian teachers never made any account of difference of sex. When Jesus fed *the five thousand*, [Matt. xiv. 21,] and also *the four thousand*, [Matt. xv. 38,] there were "women and children" among them, as well as men. The same was the case with the Christian churches in *Corinth*, and other cities of *Greece*. Even at *Athens*, where *Paul* did not make many converts, there was one woman, of the name of *Damaris*; (*Acts* xvii. 34;) what her condition

* See Vol. XIV. pp. 337, 338.

† See Vol. II. pp. 92, 93, 247.

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 11. See Vol. XIV. p. 75.

was, is not said; but as she is mentioned by name, it is probable that, like *Lydia*, she was of some considerable rank, at least her own mistress, not subject to the controul of another.

SECTION IX.

Inferences to be drawn from the Comparison of Socrates and Jesus.

1. IN comparing the characters, the moral instructions, and the whole of the history of *Socrates* and *Jesus*, it is, I think, impossible not to be sensibly struck with the great advantage of revealed religion, such as that of the Jews and the Christians, as enlightening and enlarging the minds of men, and imparting a superior excellence of character. This alone can account for the difference between *Socrates* and *Jesus*, and the disciples of each of them; but this one circumstance is abundantly sufficient for the purpose.

The manner in which the mind of *Jesus* must have been impressed by the persuasion that he had, of his peculiar relation to God on the one part, and to all mankind on the other, could not fail to make him superior to *Socrates*, or any other man, in elevation of mind, whatever might be their superiority with respect to intellect, general knowledge, or natural advantages of any other kind.

The far greater extent of the views of *Jesus*, as bearing an important relation to all mankind, and the most distant generations of them, being their *prophet* and *king*, and also his own peculiar relation to God, the common parent of them all, being, as it were, his *vicegerent upon earth*, necessarily gave him an elevation of character that neither *Socrates* nor any other man could have.

Interested as he was for all that should ever bear the Christian name, (which, in due time, he did not doubt would be the case with all men,) with what fervour did he pray (*John* xvii. 21—24), that they might be *one with him and his Father, as they two were one*, and that they might share in *the glory that was destined for himself from the foundation of the world!** What dignity, as well as piety, do we see here! What other man could have used such language as this?

The habitual piety of *Jesus* was such as could not have been expected in *Socrates*, or the most virtuous of the

* See Vol. XIII. pp. 334, 336.

Heathens. He appears to have spoken and acted as at all times not only in the immediate presence, but as by the immediate direction of God. The *words that he spake*, he said, (*John* xiv. 10,) *were not his own, but those of the Father who sent him*; and who, being always with him, and always hearing him, performed the miraculous works by which his divine mission was evidenced.* So assiduous was he in the discharge of his high commission, that, as he said, (*John* iv. 34,) it was *his meat and drink to do the will of his heavenly Father*, and *finish the work that he gave him to do*.

Raised as he was to a pre-eminence above all other men, he seems to have been even more than any other man, sensible of his dependence upon God, and he had recourse to him on all occasions. We even read (*Luke* vi. 12) of his spending *a whole night in prayer to God*; and it was in obedience to his will that, notwithstanding the dread that he naturally felt for the painful death to which he was destined, and the horror that he expressed on the near view of it, he voluntarily and patiently submitted to it. He prayed, and with peculiar earnestness, that the bitter cup might pass from him, but immediately added, (*Matt.* xxvi. 39,) “Not as I will, but as thou wilt.” Nothing like this could be expected from *Socrates*, or any Heathen. Their knowledge of God, his providence, and his will, were too obscure and uncertain for the purpose, though they had been ever so well disposed.

As the worship of *Socrates* was, nominally at least, directed only to *Jupiter*, *Juno*, and the other gods that were acknowledged by his country, it was hardly possible for him not to retain such ideas as were generally entertained of them; and notwithstanding his endeavours to divest his mind of every thing in their character that must have appeared unworthy of divinity, such is the power of association, that it was impossible he should ever do it completely; and if not, his reverence for the objects of his worship must have fallen infinitely short of that which *Jesus* and the *Jews* in general had for their God; and every sentiment of devotion must have partaken of that imperfection. The love or attachment of *Socrates* to them, his dread of their power, his devotedness to their will in doing, and his resignation to their will in suffering, the sense he had of his constant dependence upon them, and of their presence with him, must have

* See Vol. XIII. pp. 314, 315

been very little, compared with the same sentiments in the mind of a pious Jew, with respect to the one great object of his worship.

This must be apparent to any person who will read the book of *Psalms*, and compare those devotional compositions with any (if there be any such) of a similar nature, composed by Heathens. But there was nothing in the religions of the Heathens, at least among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, that could inspire any sentiments that deserve to be called *devotional*. This striking difference no person will say was owing to any superiority of genius in the *Hebrew* poets, and, therefore, it must have been owing to superior knowledge; and this superior knowledge could not have had any source but from divine revelation. Without this, the *Hebrews* would, no doubt, have been as absurdly superstitious as any of the neighbouring nations; and, consequently, their ideas of the power and providence of God as little proper to inspire sentiments of true devotion.

To persons of reflection, and acquainted with the state of the Heathen world, and especially their turn of thinking and acting with respect to religion, there needs no other evidence of the truth of revelation than a comparison of the hymns in honour of the Heathen gods, by *Callimachus*,* and other Grecian poets, or the *Carmen Seculare* of *Horace*,† with the *Psalms* of *David*, and other devotional parts of the books of Scripture, with respect to justness and elevation of sentiment, and correspondent sublimity of language.

2. In the account that we have of the *dæmon* of *Socrates*, what he says of it himself, and what appears to have been generally thought of it by others, we clearly perceive that there is nothing so naturally incredible as modern *unbelievers* represent, with respect to divine interpositions, either in the case of the vulgar, or the philosophers of ancient times.‡

* A native of Cyrene, who taught a school at Alexandria, and became librarian to *Ptolomy Philadelphus*. Of "800 pieces," attributed to this poet by *Suidas*, there remain "only a few hymns and epigrams." *Callimachus* is supposed to have died about B. C. 244. See *Callimaque* in *Nowv. Dict. Hist.*; *Gen. Biog. Dict.* III. pp. 92—94; *Harwood's Greek Classics*, Ed. 2, p. 48.

† Composed by command of *Augustus*, for the fifth celebration of the *Secular Games*, A. R. 736, B. C. 16. See *Suetonius in August.* xxxi.; *Delphin*, Note 2; Francis's *Note on Carmen Seculare*. On mentioning these games, *Suetonius* thus records the emperor's care of the public morals: "*Secularibus ludis juvenes utriusque sexûs prohibuit ullum nocturnum spectaculum frequentare, nisi cum aliquo majore natu propinquorum.*" *August.* xxxi. (He forbade the youth of either sex to frequent the nocturnal shows in the secular games, except in the company of some elder relation.) On the *Games*, see *Kennett*, pp. 299—302.

‡ Mr. Priestley at the end of this *Comparison*, in the *Northumberland* edition, inserted the following Note:

"My father, to shew how little stress he laid on a casual opinion, has directed me to add the following sentence concerning the *dæmon* of *Socrates* :

The universal practice of having recourse to oracles and divination, is alone an abundant proof of this, with respect to mankind in general; and the idea of a *mystical union with God*, and a consequent intimate communication with him, came into Christianity from the later *Platonists*. In every thing of this kind, the emperors *Marcus Aurelius* and *Julian*, the great boasts of modern *unbelievers*, were as credulous as the lowest of the vulgar.*

Where, indeed, can be the impropriety or improbability of the Being that made the world, giving attention to it, and giving suitable intimations of that attention? and this no uniform appearances will do. It is not men's seeing the sun rise and set, or their observing the regular changes of the seasons that impresses them with the idea of any thing supernatural; but unusual appearances, though equally natural, arising from the same principles and laws of nature, such as thunder, lightning, eclipses, and earthquakes, &c. Both history and daily observation is a proof of this. And surely miracles, performed by duly authorized prophets, do this infinitely better than any merely unusual natural phenomena.

This opinion of the natural incredibility of accounts of miracles, on which Mr. Hume, and after him other *unbelievers*, lay so much stress, † as what no positive testimony can shake, is quite a modern thing. But had this incredibility had any foundation in nature, it must have been the same at all times, and in all countries; and it must have affected all classes of men, princes and peasants, the learned and the unlearned; whereas all history shews that a propensity to believe accounts of divine interpositions has been universal. It entered into all systems of religion whatever, and no nation was ever without some religion. It is impossible, therefore, not to conclude, that a system which supposes miracles, is naturally adapted to gain belief, and,

"As to the dæmon of Socrates, on which you urge me so closely, I professed not to have any fixed opinion about it. If I had been asked what I thought of it a short time before the writing of my pamphlet, I should have said as you do, it was probably nothing more than his own good sense; but on considering his character more particularly, I was unwilling to think that such a man would persist through life, and to his dying moments, in telling a lie. And what the Supreme Being might please to do by or with him, or any man, neither you nor I can tell. But I never said, as you now quote me, that 'God spake to Socrates by a dæmon,' which you call (p. 75) 'a glaring deformity, of my assertion.' Such an idea never occurred to me. As my opinion on this very unimportant subject is unsettled, it is very possible that I may revert to my former opinion and yours about it. *Second Letter to Dr. Linn.*" See *Plutarch* "On the Dæmon of Socrates," *Morals*, II. (Pt. vi.), pp. 1—59; *Charpentier's* "Life of Socrates," prefixed to the *Memorabilia*, Ed. 2, 1722, pp. 55—67.

* See Vol. IV. pp. 511, 512; Vol. VIII. pp. 396, 397.

† See *supra*, pp. 37, 313, Note †.

therefore, that a pretension to miracles is far from being a circumstance unfavourable to its reception ; it is rather a presumption in its favour. If it be any object with the Divine Being to give mankind intimations of his attention to them, and government over them, which no person can say is impossible or improbable, he could not take any other method than that of miracles to gain his end.

Much has been said about *Socrates* referring *Alcibiades* to a *future instructor*, as if he had been sensible of the want of supernatural communication, and that he hoped for and expected it. But supposing *Plato's* account of the conversation to be depended upon, which it certainly cannot, I can by no means infer so much from it. After expressing the uncertainty men are under, with respect to proper requests to the gods, he tells *Alcibiades*, that " he must wait till some person inform him (τις μάθῃ) how he should conduct himself both with respect to the gods and to men."*

When, in reply to this, *Alcibiades* expresses much importunity to be informed who this teacher was, taking for granted that it was some man, (for he says, " I would gladly know who this man is,") *Socrates* only says, that " it was one who cared much for him," meaning, probably, that he was much his friend ; " but that at present a degree of darkness hung over his mind, which must first be dispersed." I therefore think it most probable that he meant *himself*, but that he thought his pupil not then sufficiently prepared to receive farther instruction on the subject.

3. We see in the case of *Socrates* himself, as well as in that of the people of *Athens* in general, the strong attachment which the Heathens had to the rites of their ancient religions. To disregard them, and to adopt other rites, was punishable with death. The *Athenians*, as well as other nations, occasionally adopted the worship of other gods, and other modes of worship, but individuals were not allowed to do it. It must be done by the authority of the state, and at Athens it was by the court of *Areopagus*. On this account the apostle *Paul*, who was said to endeavour to introduce the worship of strange gods, and a new religion, was brought before this court.†

But though Heathen nations sometimes adopted other rites, they never abandoned their ancient ones. There does not appear to have been any example of this in all antiquity.

* *Alcibiades*, ii. p. 295. (P.) See Vol. II. p. 105.

† See, on *Acts* xvii. 19, Vol. XIII. pp. 463, 464.

Nor can we wonder at this, when it is considered, that in all Heathen countries, the prosperity of the state was thought to depend upon the observance of the religious rites of their ancestors, the founders of the respective states. No principle appears to have been more fixed in the minds of all men than this. We see it in the extreme reluctance with which some of the most absurd and indecent rites, as the *Lupercalia* at Rome, were given up.* And to the very last, the more learned, and therefore, it may be presumed, the least superstitious of the *Romans*, constantly upbraided the Christians with being the cause of the decline of the empire, by the introduction of their new religion.

This attachment of the Heathens to their religion was necessarily increased by its entering into all the customs and confirmed habits of common life; some rite of a religious nature being observed from the time of their birth to that of their death, and in fact from the morning to the evening of every day. Every entertainment, public or private, was tinged with it. No act of magistracy could be performed without it; and in countries the most advanced in civilization, the public festivals, in honour of their gods, were very numerous. It will be seen in *Potter's Antiquities of Greece*, that not less than sixty-six of them were observed by the *Athenians*,† and several of them were of some days' continuance. And in general there was so much in them of festivity and amusement, bordering, to say the least, on licentiousness, that they were very fascinating to the common people.

When it is considered how discordant and inconsistent all this was with the principles of Christianity, so that when any Heathen became a Christian he must change every habit of his life, as well as his opinions; that, let him live ever so privately, he could hardly pass a single day without the change being observed, and that at the birth of a child, a marriage, or a funeral, it must have been conspicuous to all his neighbours, and the whole city, though he might have found some excuse for not attending the public sacrifices, and other rites of a visible nature, and though he should not have thought himself obliged (which all Christians are) to

* Not "till the time of *Anastasius*" (491—518). *Kennett*, p. 65. See Vol. IX. p. 59.

† "As they exceeded all other people in the number of their gods, so they outdid them in the number of their festivals; which, as *Xenophon* reports, (*De Repub. Atheniens.*) were twice as many as any other city observed." *Archæologia Græca* (B. ii. Ch. xix.), I. p. 360.

make an open profession of his faith, *confessing Christ before men*, we shall not wonder at the difficulty with which this great change must have been made, any more than at the alarm that was taken when many converts were made to Christianity, and the consequent persecution of Christians, as seditious persons, men who “turned the world upside down,” (*Acts* xvii. 6,) their principles tending to the ruin of all states.

While the Christians were few, and generally considered as converts to *Judaism*, which was universally tolerated, and while they behaved in a very peaceable, inoffensive manner, they might not give much alarm, notwithstanding their singularities; but when they were observed to be numerous, they would not fail to give alarm to all Heathen governors. They were then exposed to the most unrelenting persecution, except where the acting magistrates were secretly disposed in their favour.

The rapid progress of Christianity in these circumstances will ever appear the most extraordinary thing in the history of the world. It appears from the epistles of *Paul*, that in his time there were Christian churches in all the more considerable cities in the eastern part of the *Roman* empire. In the time of the emperor *Trajan*, the younger *Pliny*, then governor of *Bithynia*, complained that the rites of the ancient religions were generally discontinued in his province;* and in the space of about three hundred years, so numerous and respectable were the Christians become, in the whole extent of that vast empire, that the emperors themselves found they might safely declare themselves Christians.

To account for the rise and progress of Christianity, and the overthrow of *Heathenism*, and this without violence, in the whole extent of the *Roman* empire, in so short a space of time, is a problem that no unbeliever has seriously attempted to solve, except Mr. Gibbon may be said to have endeavoured to do it. But his observations on the subject are so exceedingly futile, that they discover equal prejudice and ignorance; ignorance of the common principles of human nature, of the nature of Heathenism, and of the state of the Heathen world.† I proposed to enter into the discussion of this important subject with him, but he petulantly declined it, as may be seen in the letters that passed between us relating to it, published in the *Appendix to the first volume of*

* See Vol. IV. p. 524.

† See *Ibid.* pp. 535—548; Vol. V. pp. 480—494

my Discourses on the Evidence of Revealed Religion,* and also in the *Life of Mr. Gibbon*, by one of his friends.† At my time of life I cannot engage in this, or any other controversy; but I earnestly wish, as a friend to important truth, that some learned and candid *unbeliever* (and such, I doubt not, there are) would engage in it. He would find Christians enow equally learned and candid to discuss the question with him.

4. Neither *Socrates* nor *Jesus* were writers, and there seems to be more of dignity in their characters in consequence of it, as if they were not very solicitous about transmitting their names to posterity; confident, that as far as it was an object with them, it would be sufficiently done by others. All the accounts, therefore, that we have of them come from their disciples and friends. And there is a remarkable difference in the manner in which the life of *Socrates* is written by *Xenophon*, and that of *Jesus* by the *Evangelists*. There cannot be a doubt but that the *Evangelists* had a much higher opinion of their Master than *Xenophon* or *Plato* had of theirs. The traces of this are numerous and indisputable; but there is not in their writings any direct *encomium* or *praise* of him, as there is, in the *Greek* writers, of *Socrates*; and yet without any assistance of this kind, a reader of moderate discernment cannot help forming a much higher idea of *Jesus* than he does of *Socrates* from the *facts* recorded of him, and the *discourses* ascribed to him.

Indeed, we have no example of such simplicity in writing as that of the Scriptures of the *Old* and *New Testaments* in all the *Heathen* world; and it is not easy to account for the difference, especially with respect to the later writers, except that *Moses* having begun to write in this simple manner, the succeeding writers, having no other model, naturally followed that; inserting in their compositions nothing that appeared superfluous, as direct encomiums are, when the facts from which such encomiums are drawn, are before the reader; who may be supposed as capable of drawing a proper inference from them as the writer himself.

As the sacred writers say nothing directly in praise of

* See Vol. XV. p. 362, *Note*.

† Lord Sheffield published in 1796 the "Miscellaneous Works of Edward Gibbon, Esq., with Memoirs of his Life and Writings, composed by himself," with a *Continuation* by the Editor. This correspondence is in *Misc. Works*, 4to. I. pp. 564—570. See *Appendix*, No. VII.

those whom they most esteemed and admired, they say nothing directly in dispraise, or censure, of those whom they most disliked, but leave the circumstances they simply mention to make their natural impression upon their readers. And from the effects of these two different modes of writing, the *natural* and the *artificial*, as they may be termed, the former appears to be better calculated to answer the purpose of the writer than the latter. When a man directly praises or censures another, we suspect some previous bias for or against him, and are upon our guard; but when we read a simple narrative of facts, without any explanatory remarks of the writer, we have no suspicion of any thing unfavourable to truth. We think we see with our own eyes, and hear with our own ears, and that we thus judge for ourselves.

ON PLATONISM.

INTRODUCTION.

PLATO was the professed disciple of *Socrates*, and attended him eight years. His attachment to him appears by the sum that he raised to procure his release from imprisonment, and his eagerness to speak in his defence at his trial. The veneration in which he held his memory is evident from his making him the principal speaker in many of his dialogues, and the person who delivers his own sentiments in them.

After the death of *Socrates*, *Plato* travelled in quest of knowledge, first into *Italy*, where he conversed with the disciples of *Pythagoras*, and afterwards into *Egypt*, where, being known to be a person of considerable distinction in his own country, he appears to have been received with great respect, and from the *eastern* part of the world in which it is said he travelled in the disguise of a merchant, he seems to have got some knowledge, directly or indirectly, of the system that generally prevailed there.

That he should expect to learn something in countries out of the bounds of *Greece*, is not extraordinary, as it is acknowledged by him, that "what the Greeks knew concerning the gods, and their worship, was derived from the Barbarians." But he says, "what the Greeks learned of the Barbarians we have improved."* Notwithstanding this

* *Epinomis.* (P.)

acknowledgment, he is willing to ascribe more merit to the *Greeks* than to them, when he says, that “though there is the greatest difficulty in the invention of these things, we hope that all the Greeks will honour the one God in a better manner than the Barbarians, especially as instructed and warned by the Delphic oracle.”* So that, in his opinion, the *Greeks* had divine instruction as well as human.

He farther acknowledges that, in the early ages, “the Greeks entertained very imperfect ideas of the gods and their worship, having low ideas of their characters, which they did well to correct. Because in time past,” he says, “our ancestors formed wrong opinions of the gods, and their progenies, as if they had been animals; we should now treat the subject differently.”† In this he alludes to the marriages of the gods and goddesses, and their reputed offspring, in other gods, and also in their acceding to the popular notions, adopted and embellished by the poets, which gave him such offence, that we shall find he proscribed their writings, and excluded them from his commonwealth. Indeed, these notions of the vulgar were rejected by all who pretended to philosophy, or superior knowledge, in *Greece*, from long before the time of *Socrates*, as we have seen already, and to the latest period of it.

SECTION I.

Of God and his Providence.

THE being of a god, or of gods, for *Plato* uses both the phrases promiscuously, he generally takes for granted. Occasionally, however, he introduces arguments for his opinion,‡ from the consideration of the structure of the earth, the sun, the stars, and the whole universe. “How could bodies of such magnitude,” he says, “perform their circuits without God? I therefore assert that God is the cause of this, and that there cannot be any other.”§ He also argues “from the variety of seasons, dividing time into years and months, and also from the consent of all nations, Greeks and Barbarians.”|| But according to him, and indeed all the Heathen philosophers without exception, the *matter* out of which the world was made, was not created by God, but found by him; having existed from eternity as well as himself, but in a con-

* *Epinomis.* (P.)

‡ Especially *De Legibus*, L. I. (P.)

§ *De Legibus*, L. X. (P.)

† *Ibid.* (P.)

§ *Epinomis.* (P.)

fused, disorderly state, such as was generally termed *chaos*. The being of a God, or gods, *Plato* thought to be so evident, that he says, "No person persists in his disbelief of the gods from youth to old age."*

There is a great air of piety in the writings of *Plato*; and this, no doubt, contributed to make his philosophy so well received by the early Christians. In a letter to *Dion*, he says, "By the favour of the gods things go well."† The same pious language occurs again in the same letter. That he preferred the term *god* to that of *gods*, is evident from his letter to *Dionysius* of *Syracuse*, in which he informs him that, in his serious letters he begins with the term *god*, but that in those in which he was not serious, he uses the term *gods*.‡ This, however, is no guide to us with respect to his dialogues, so that we are left to distinguish his real sentiments from those speakers to whom he gives the advantage in the argument, which, however, is sufficiently apparent.

Notwithstanding *Plato's* great admiration of *Socrates*, he did not confine himself, as *Socrates* did, to that philosophy which is of practical use in life, tending to rectify the dispositions of men, and inciting them to such virtues as would make them useful members of society, but indulged in various speculations concerning the nature of God and the universe, and in a manner that his master would not have approved. Indeed, on these great but obscure subjects he is in many respects perfectly unintelligible.

According to *Plato*, the universe was constructed by the Supreme Being, whom he frequently distinguishes by the title of *Αγαθος*, without the instrumentality of any subordinate being, according to a pattern of it previously formed in his own mind. But there is great confusion in his account of these *ideas in the Divine mind*, (which he, no doubt, borrowed from the *Pythagoreans*, as was observed before,) so that he sometimes makes them a second principle of things, and distinguishing between what is *sensible* from what is *intellectual* in man; and considering all that we see here as the object of the *senses*, he supposes these ideas to be invisible to the senses, but comprehended by the intellect; and though they exist in the Divine mind, the intellect of man has free access to them. He therefore calls them *things intelligible*, and says, that what we see here are only the shadows of them, and changeable, whereas those intelligible ideas are the only things that are unchangeable, and

* *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.)

† *Epistola*, iv. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* xiii. (P.)

permanent. The great object of philosophy, according to him, is to raise the mind to the contemplation of these higher, intelligible, and permanent objects.

Aristotle ascribes this view of things to *Heraclitus*. "The doctrine of ideas," he says, "is advanced by those who were convinced by *Heraclitus*, that sensible things are always flowing and changeable; so that if there be any such thing as *real knowledge*, which was supposed to require a *fixed object*, there must be things of a different nature from those that are the object of our senses. They must be fixed, there being no proper knowledge of things that are flowing."*

To this doctrine *Plato* seems to allude when he says, "All see the body of the sun, but not the soul that animates it; not being the object of any of our senses, it is seen by the mind."† All the meaning that I can make of this doctrine of ideas, perceived by the intellect, and not by the senses, things not fluctuating and variable, as the objects that we converse with are, is, that they mean what we call *abstract ideas*, as those of horses, men, trees, &c., divested of the circumstances of colour, size, place, &c., which always attend individual objects; and in this there is no great mystery, but still every actual idea has some peculiarity or other, as well as real objects.

On this mysterious doctrine of ideas, which were personified by the later *Platonists*, and made a kind of *second god*, the immediate author of the creation, was founded the doctrine of the *Christian Trinity*, as I have shewn at large in my *History of Early Opinions concerning Jesus Christ*.‡ The mischief that has arisen from false metaphysical principles has been most extensive, affecting every article of Christian faith and practice, as may be seen in several of my writings. Indeed, no branch of science has wholly escaped this subtle and baleful influence. Happily, however, good sense is at length prevailing over every thing that is not founded on reason and truth; and with this, though seemingly foreign to the subject of religion, we are deriving that light which exhibits Christianity in its best and purest state, as it came from Christ and the apostles, who, knowing nothing of Heathen philosophy or metaphysics, delivered the plainest truths in the plainest language, though they have since their times been most strangely perverted by an unnatural mixture of Heathen principles and Heathen superstition.

* *Metaphysics*, I., xii. C. iv. (P.)

† *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.)

‡ Vol. VI. pp. 169—172.

Notwithstanding the absurdity of *Plato's* metaphysical notions concerning the nature of God, and his relation to the universe, his ideas of his *attributes* and of his *providence* were in general just and excellent, agreeing with those of the Scriptures.

Having frequently represented the Supreme Being as the friend of virtue and the enemy of vice, he says, "God cannot have the disposition that he hates. God approves of those who resemble himself, and is angry (*νεμεσσει*) with those who are unlike to him.* But nothing is so like God as a good man.—He is the most sacred of all things,"† meaning that he has the nearest relation to divinity.

The term by which he generally characterizes the Supreme Being is in the singular number, viz. *the Good*, (*ἡ Αγαθὴ*), vindicating his most essential attribute. "Evil," he says, "cannot come from God,"‡ and "we must look to some other than God for the cause of evil."§ This principle, however, he did not carry so far as the *Stoics*, who maintained that God was incapable of *anger*, so that he would not punish even the wicked. On the contrary, *Plato* represents the Supreme Being, though termed *the Good*, as no less *just* than merciful. "That there are gods," he says, "and that they are good, and respect justice more than men, is the best introduction to a body of laws."|| After denominating him "the beginning, the middle, and the end, and the supporter of all things," he says, "he is always accompanied by justice, and punishes those who depart from the divine law. The humble follow him quiet and composed, but he that is elevated by his riches, his beauty, or any other advantage, as if he stood in no need of a guide, is deserted by him; and though such a person may appear enviable to man, in the end he destroys himself, his family, and the state."¶ Agreeably to this, he says, "Let not the success of wicked and unjust men, who, though not truly happy, are generally reputed to be so, and who are extolled in poems and discourses, drive thee rashly into impiety; nor be disturbed though they should continue so to old age, and this prosperity should extend to their children. Nor be thou angry with the gods who permit this, or think that they neglect the affairs of men; for they will not be exempt from punishment after death."***

* *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.) † *Alcibiades*, ii. (P.) ‡ *De Republica*, iii. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* xi. (P.) || *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.) ¶ *Ibid.* L. iv. (P.)

*** *Ibid.* L. x. (P.)

Veracity is another moral attribute that *Plato* ascribes to God. "The nature of God and of dæmons," he says, "admits not of falsehood; for God is altogether simple and true in his words and actions. He neither changes himself, nor can he deceive others, by vicious speeches or omens, to men sleeping or awake."* This he says by way of censure on *Homer*, who represents *Jupiter* as acting in this deceitful and unworthy manner, disgraceful to a man, and much more so to a god. To the Divine character, in this respect, he seems to allude, though with much obscurity, when he says, "As light and our view of it, are not the sun, but the resemblance of the sun, so knowledge and truth are the image of the Good, but not the Good," meaning God; "the majesty of the Good itself is greater."† Agreeable to this honourable idea of the Divine character, he says, that "the offerings to God," meaning those that are most acceptable to him, "are honour, veneration, and gratitude."‡

But notwithstanding this, we shall see that, like all the other Heathen philosophers, *Plato* strongly recommends a conformity to the idolatrous rites of religious worship established in his country, and even the rigorous punishment of all that did not conform to them; so far were they from following the light they really had, and so little prospect was there of the world in general being enlightened and reformed by their instructions.

The writings of *Plato* contain several just and beautiful illustrations of the providence and moral government of God. "God," he says, "is the shepherd of mankind, taking the same care of us that a shepherd does of his sheep and oxen."§ "He takes care of the smallest things as well as of the greatest. None of the causes of neglect in men can take place with respect to God."|| "We all acknowledge," he says, "that the gods see every thing, that they are all powerful and good, yea, the best possible, nor can they be affected by idleness or fear. They, therefore, cannot despise or neglect any thing because it is small. Besides, there is more difficulty in seeing and disposing of small things than of great ones.

"The universe," he adds, "belongs to God, and he will not neglect what is his own. He cannot be called a wise physician who only attends to the body in general, and not to the particular parts. Nor do governors of cities, or

* *De Repub.* L. ii. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. vi. (P.)

‡ *Euthyphro.* (P.)

§ *Politicus.* (P.)

|| *De Legibus,* L. x. (P.)

masters of families neglect small things. Architects also make use of small stones in laying the larger ones. And let us not think that God, who is the wisest of all, is less wise than man. Besides, man is a worshipper of the gods,"* and, therefore, more deserving of his attention and care.

To shew that the Supreme Being is incapable of being diverted from the just administration of affairs, by any unworthy motive, he says, "To say that the gods are easily appeased, is to compare them to dogs or wolves, which are pacified by giving them part of the plunder, and then suffer them to worry the sheep. Charioteers are not to be bribed, nor are commanders of armies, or physicians, nor are husbandmen or shepherds to be deceived in this manner, nor even can crafty wolves thus deceive dogs. And are the gods the greatest guardians of the greatest things, and are the keepers of the greatest things worse than dogs, or men of moderate capacity, who never act unjustly, deceived by the bribes of unjust men?"†

There is hardly any advantage that men are possessed of, that *Plato* does not ascribe to the gods, and to their goodwill to men. "It appears to me," he says, "that God sent gifts to men by Prometheus, together with fire."‡ "It is not by art," he says, "but by nature, and the favour of the gods, that we cultivate the earth."§ He makes God the author of friendship, by disposing dispositions that are similar, and formed for friendship, to unite. || "In the forming of states," he says, "we must begin with invoking the gods, that they may be propitious to us, and assist us in making laws."¶ And after representing the advantage of the right worship of the gods, as the most important of all things to be attended to, he says, "No man can rightly teach this without the assistance of God."** He even ascribes to divine inspiration the great things that eminent statesmen do for their country, without understanding the nature, or foreseeing the consequences of them, adding, that "all good men are in some sense divine."††

It must have been among the *Pythagoreans* that *Plato* learned what he writes, but in a manner that is very unintelligible, concerning *numbers*, of which their philosophy made great use. It seems most probable, that by metaphysical reasoning they made the Supreme Being to be represented by *unity*; and as all numbers consist of unity repeated,

* *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.)

† *Ibid.* (P.)

‡ *Philebus*. (P.)

§ *Epinomis*. (P.)

|| *Lysis*. (P.)

¶ *De Legibus*, L. iv. (P.)

** *Epinomis*. (P.)

†† *Meno*. (P.)

and after thus proceeding from it, are resolvable into it again, so all things, after proceeding from their *first cause*, will be resolved into it. But this is not the only use that *Plato*, no doubt after the *Pythagoreans*, made of this comparison. But whatever be the knowledge that we derive from this source, *Plato* ascribes it to God. "We affirm," he says, "that numbers are the gift of God, and on them all the arts of life depend, but this no prophet (*μαῦνις*) can comprehend. Whatever is wicked and irregular, is deficient with respect to number. Many animals cannot learn from their parents the use of numbers. It is God that gives us this power."*

"The excellent ancients," he says, "who were nearer to the gods than we are, taught us that the universe consists of one and many, which always has been, and ever will be."† "The resemblance of numbers dissimilar in their nature, when reduced to a plane, is evident; and this, to a person of understanding, must appear not to be a human, but a divine wonder."‡ We do not, however, find that this mysterious doctrine of numbers was taken up by any of the succeeding sects of philosophy, so that it probably died with *Plato*.

SECTION II.

Of the Polytheism of Plato.

WITH all *Plato's* knowledge of the Divinity, of his attributes, and his universal providence, and of his preference of the term *god* to that of *gods*, when he is treating of the Divine nature, he was, like all Heathens, a polytheist, and like them an advocate for the strict observance of the idolatrous rites of his country.

He seems to have learned the doctrine of two principles in the *East*, from his saying, "Are there one or more souls? Not less than two; the one beneficent, and the other maleficent;" § and also from his saying, as was quoted before, that "we must look to something else than God for the source of evil." But this was never a doctrine that prevailed in the *West*. But that *Plato* considered more beings than one to be entitled to the rank of gods, is evident from his saying, "Why should we not take the part of God, who is the

* *Epinomis.* (P.)

† *Philebus.* (P.)

‡ *Epinomis.* (P.)

§ *De Leg. l. x.* By this he might mean *matter*, which was by some considered as refractory, and the only source of evil. But by saying it was *maleficent*, he seemed to consider it as a principle that had intelligence and activity. (P.)

author of all good? But which god, perhaps the god of *the heavens*, which we consider as the most righteous, as all the dæmons and the other gods agree to honour him, and pray to him above all.”* What he meant by the divinity of the *heavens*, whether the Supreme Being or the sun, is not clear.

He evidently considered all the celestial bodies as animated, and entitled to the rank of gods. “The divine race of stars,” he says, “must be considered as celestial animals, with most beautiful bodies, and happy, blessed souls; and that they have souls, is evident from the regularity of their motions.”† In a manner that to me is perfectly unintelligible, he derives the different orders of gods from the different elements in nature, placing them, after mentioning by name *Jupiter*, *Juno*, and the dæmons, according to their different ranks and provinces.‡ He seems, too, to have considered the earth as a proper deity, and the parent of the animals that exist upon it. “For the same reason,” he says, “that a mother bears her children, the earth has produced men; for it is the earth, and nothing else, that supplies them with food, as having itself produced them.”§

Plato's dread of innovations in matters of religion, appears from the following passage: “A legislator of the least understanding will make no innovations, and take care not to turn his state to any other mode of worship, or dare to move what his country has established by law or custom concerning sacrifices; for he knows that no mortal can come at any certainty with respect to these matters.”|| And yet he approved of such additions to the public rites as would be an improvement upon any of them. “A legislator,” he says, “will be free from blame if he thinks better of the gods than his predecessors, and, by excellent discipline, honour them with hymns and praises, and live accordingly.” This, however, was not introducing the worship of new gods.

Having distinguished the crime of *impiety* into three kinds, viz. the maintaining that there are no gods, that they take no care of human affairs, or that they are easily appeased by sacrifices, he prescribes the following punishment for the different degrees of guilt in this respect:

“If a man neglect the gods, by omitting sacrifices and despising oaths, he must be punished, lest he make others like himself. There are many who deceive others in this

* *Epinomis.* (P.) See *Leland*, C. R., I. p. 329.

† *Epinomis.* (P.) See *Leland*, C. R., I. pp. 93, 328.

‡ *Epinomis.* (P.) § *Menexenus.* (P.) || *Epinomis.* (P.)

manner, deserving to die more than one or two deaths. Others deserve only castigation or imprisonment. They who think that the gods neglect human affairs, and they who think them easily appeased, are not to be confounded. They who think so, not from any bad principle, but a kind of madness, should be imprisoned not less than five years, without any citizen being allowed to go near them, except those who will admonish them of their errors. If after this they continue in their impiety, they must be punished with death.

“Some who are obstinate in these opinions, and draw many after them, especially the common people, whole families, and the state,” meaning, no doubt, the danger of influencing the whole state, “should be confined in prisons surrounded by the sea, where no free person should have access to them, and when they die, they should be buried without the bounds of the state; and if any person should bury them, he should be accounted guilty of impiety. If he had children, they should be taken care of by the state, from the time that the father was condemned.

“There should also be a general law to prevent any person from making what gods or what sacred rites he pleases; and for this reason, no persons should have chapels for worship in their own houses, but perform their worship in public, and be punished till they do so. If any person, not from childishness, but from depraved impiety, act in this manner, by sacrificing either in private or in the public worship of the gods, let him be condemned to death as impure; and let the regulators of the laws judge concerning the motives of his conduct.”*

So intolerant were the wisest and best-disposed of all the Heathens, with respect to religion, that we cannot wonder at the dread they entertained of Christianity, when it began to spread; as it was, according to their ideas, the height of *impiety*, aiming at nothing less than the overthrow of every thing that was deemed the most sacred, and what had been established from time immemorial, and on which it was universally taken for granted that the well-being of every state depended.

But Christ was fully aware of this difficulty, and he apprized his followers of it. He enabled them, however, to overcome it, though they were forewarned that they should be *hated of all men for the sake of his name*, that is, merely

* *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.)

for being Christians, and that *they who killed them would think they did God service*, which was actually the case, both with respect to *Jews* and *Heathens*. And, great as this obstacle was, which made all that was powerful in the world the enemy of Christianity, it finally triumphed; and it is now the prevailing religion in all those countries in which *Jupiter*, *Juno*, and numberless other objects of Heathen worship, were most revered, but whose names are now to be learned from history only. This is an argument of peculiar importance with respect to the evidence of Christianity, but can only be felt and understood by those who are acquainted with the opinions and prejudices of the Heathens at the time of its promulgation. And these opinions and prejudices appear now to be so unreasonable and extraordinary, that a faithful account of them is barely credible. That *Plato* was both sensible of the great ignorance of the common people on the subject of religion, and of the hazard that might be the consequence of informing them better, appears from his saying, “It is a difficult thing to discover the nature of the Creator of the universe; and, being discovered, it is impossible to expose the discovery to vulgar understandings.”*

This intolerance in matters of religion is the more extraordinary in the case of *Plato*, as he acknowledges the imperfection of the popular religion when it was first instituted in *Greece*, and commends those statesmen who improved it, in order to do more honour to their gods; and as he condemns such poems as those of *Homer* and *Hesiod*, because they led persons, and especially young persons, to entertain unworthy notions of their gods; when it must have been evident to himself and every one else, that the popular religion, which he wished to perpetuate, was founded altogether on those very notions. *Hesiod* and *Homer* did not make a religion for the *Greeks*, but only made use of what they found universally received, to embellish their poems, and to please those before whom they were to be recited.

So much was *Plato* offended at these poems, and all others of the same nature and tendency, that he excluded them all, without exception, from his commonwealth, though he would retain such hymns as were composed in honour of the gods. But even the hymns, if they resembled those ascribed to *Homer*, or those of *Callimachus*, are similar to the poems of *Hesiod* and *Homer*, repeating the same popular and ab-

* *Timæus*. (P.)

surd stories. "We reject," he says, "poems from this commonwealth, because they deceive men, as Hesiod by his accounts of *Cælum* and *Saturn*, which, if they were true, ought to be concealed, rather than divulged; for it must not be told a young man, that the greatest crimes may be committed without any thing extraordinary happening, or that a man who punishes an offending parent does no wrong, but what the greatest and best of the gods have done."* "The imitation of the poets," he says, "attended to in early years, affects the morals and nature itself; with respect to the body, the speech, and the very thought."†

This is the more extraordinary in *Plato*, as he ascribes to the poets a real inspiration, the same that was generally ascribed to the priestesses of *Apollo* at *Delphi*.‡ "Poets who," he says, "resemble the Corybantes, who are seized with a divine afflatus, and know not what they do; they are the interpreters of the gods."§

SECTION III.

Of the Human Soul.

THE sentiments of *Plato* concerning the *human soul* are by no means clear and distinct, nor are they pursued by him to their natural consequences, as they were by the Stoics afterwards.

Matter was always acknowledged to be incapable of any kind of *action*, and was always thought to be *acted upon*; whereas, the igneous nature of the soul was supposed to give it natural activity. Agreeably to this, *Plato* says, "The soul has the power of moving itself."||

He is not uniform in denying what was called *passion* to the mind. He must, therefore, mean it in a gross sense, when he says, "Where there is passion, there must be generation; and this applies to the body,"¶ meaning, no doubt, that where there is generation, there must be a succession of beings produced from one another, that the death of some may make room for others; whereas, mind is incapable of any such thing, and, consequently, of that kind of passion which leads to it. It must, therefore, be immortal, and in this doctrine *Plato* is perfectly uniform and consistent.

* *De Repub.* L. ii. (P.)

§ *Io.* (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. iii. (P.)

|| *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.)

‡ *Meno.* (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* (P.)

“Every soul,” he says, “is immortal. That which is always in motion is from eternity, but that which is moved by another, must have an end.”* Accordingly, he mentioned the *pre-existence*, as well as the *immortality* of the soul; and in the *East* these two doctrines always went together, and are always ascribed to *Pythagoras*; the soul and the body being supposed to have only a temporary connexion, to answer a particular purpose. “The soul existed,” he says, “before bodies were produced, and it is the chief agent in the changes and the ornament of the body.”†

Agreeably to this doctrine of pre-existence, *Plato* maintained that all the knowledge we seem to acquire here, is only the recollection of what we knew in a former state. “It behoves man,” he says, “to understand how many sensations are united in one, and this is the recollection of what the soul, when in a state of perfection with God, saw before.”‡

So greatly superior, in the idea of all the Heathen philosophers, was the soul to the body, the latter being entirely subservient to the former, that we cannot wonder that they considered the soul as the whole *self* of a man, and the body as a thing foreign to him. “The mind,” *Plato* says, “is all that we call ourselves, and the body attends it,”§ meaning as a servant. “It is only after death,” he says, “when it has got rid of the clog of the body, that we can see what the soul really is,—whether compound or simple, and the whole of its condition.”|| It is on this supposition of the independence of the mind on the body that he advances one of his arguments for the immortality of the soul. “The soul,” he says, “cannot die by any affection of the body, but only by some disorder peculiar to itself. The soul, by the death of the body, does not become more unjust, and the death of the body is not the punishment of its injustice, but other punishments; for death is to it a freedom from every evil. Since, then, neither the death of the body, nor its own depravity, can destroy the soul, it must be immortal.”¶¶

That the souls of men are emanations from the Supreme Being, the fountain of all intelligence, seems to have been taken for granted by *Plato*, but I do not find it distinctly expressed in any part of his writings. He seems, however, to allude to it in a passage that I quoted before; but he

* *Phædrus*. (P.)

† *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.)

‡ *Phædrus*. (P.)

§ *De Legibus*, L. xii. (P.)

|| *De Repub.* L. x. (P.)

¶¶ *Ibid.* (P.)

generally considers it as retaining its individuality after death: as when he says, "In truth, the soul of each of us is immortal, and goes to the other gods, to give an account of its actions."* This agrees with his uniform language about the rewards of virtue, and the punishments of vice after death. Whether souls are to be re-united to their source afterwards, which he probably supposed, as being held to be the necessary consequence of their being originally derived from it, this retribution he must have thought would previously take place.

With respect to the *three-fold division of man*, a doctrine held by later philosophers, I do not find any thing clear or consistent in *Plato*; and the term $\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$ which, in other writers, signifies the mere *animal principle* in man, of which they partake in common with the brutes, he applies to the highest principle, that of *intelligence* in him, when he says, "The body is not the man, but the soul, ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$;) which makes use of, and commands the body."†

SECTION IV.

Of Virtues and Vices.

ON the subject of *virtue and vice*, it may be taken for granted, that the sentiments of *Plato* were not in general different from those of *Socrates*; so that it is unnecessary to make quotations from his writings, recommending the practice of virtue, and dissuading from that of vice. His belief in the being and providence of God, and in a future state of retribution, must have laid a foundation for piety and the practice of virtue in general, if what he advances on those subjects were his real sentiments; and the frequency with which he urges them, and the stress that he lays upon them, makes it difficult to believe that they were not.

In these respects, he comes nearer to the doctrines of revelation than any other of the Heathen philosophers that came after him, even than *Socrates* himself. But his arguments in proof of the immortality of the soul, and also those for a future state, are so weak, and they made so little impression on those that came after him, that it is barely possible that he could have been influenced by them himself; and his writings in general have much the air of being calculated to please the generality of his countrymen, with whom

* *De Legibus*, L. xii. (P.)

† *Alcibiades*, i. (P.)

those opinions were in some sense popular, and to whom they would, of course, tend to recommend him. And it is evident from his history that he was much more desirous of general applause than his master. On this account there will always remain some doubt with respect to the real sentiments of *Plato* on these important subjects. Judging of him by his writings, we cannot wonder that his philosophy was held in such high estimation by many of the more learned of the early Christians, and that they embraced it in preference to any other.

With respect to the proper objects of men's pursuits in life, *Plato* says, that "neither pleasure nor wisdom is to be ranked with things that are absolutely good, because what is good is perfect, and sufficient of itself,"* which, he observes, will not apply to either of them. But he was far from entertaining the extravagant opinion of the *Stoics*, in classing both pleasure and pain among the things that are absolutely indifferent, unworthy of the attention of a wise man, and incapable of affecting him.

There are three remarkable exceptions to the moral maxims of *Plato*, in which he would not have had the concurrence of *Socrates*, viz. his recommending a community of women in his commonwealth, his approbation of perjury in matters of love, and in the licentiousness which he would allow soldiers on a military expedition.

How little must *Plato* have known of human nature and human life, when he recommended a community of women in his republic, and an education of them the same with men and together with them, even so far as to exercise in the gymnasia, naked; saying, that nothing that was useful ought to be deemed shameful; that in former times it was thought shameful for men to exercise naked, but that now it was no longer so. Being naturally capable of doing many of the duties of men, such as serving their country both in the army and in civil offices, they ought, he says, to receive an education proper to qualify them for those, though they should be exempted from what was most laborious in any of those offices. By this means, and sexual commerce being confined to a proper age, which he makes to be thirty for men, and twenty for women, a more hardy race of men, he says, would be produced.†

These healthy women being accessible to more men, he

* *Philebus*. (P.)

† *De Repub.* L. v. (P.)

says, would have more children, though this now appears to be, by a wise Providence, contrary to fact, as prostitutes have seldom any children at all. The children thus promiscuously produced he would have nursed and educated together, the stronger, however, in one place, and the weaker in another, by women engaged by the state for that purpose, without giving them any intimation concerning their parents. He would not, however, allow of any sexual intercourse between men and their own mothers or daughters, &c. But it is not necessary to follow him through all the details of so visionary and absurd a scheme.

Indeed, the objections to this scheme are so obvious, and so numerous, that it is not worth while to enter into any serious discussion of it. I would only observe, that if frequent divorces have been found, as is universally acknowledged, to be attended with much evil, a community of women, which it has always been the very first step of civilization to prevent, must be attended with infinitely more and greater.

With how much more wisdom did our Saviour forbid even divorces, except on account of adultery! When the change of a partner for life is considered as *impossible*, the most discordant minds reconcile themselves to it, and live together more happily than if they had the liberty to separate, which, in that case, they would upon every trifling disgust be thinking of and contriving; and this being the case of a whole society, jealousy, and violence in every form, would be unavoidable.

Besides, no mode of education is equal to that which arises from the affection of parents to their own children, and the attachment of children to their parents. This is a source of the purest satisfaction to both, and to the very close of life. And what has any parent to look to in the infirmities of old age comparable to the affection and attention that he may reasonably expect from his own children? What a miserable legislator must that be, who would deprive mankind of the purest source of domestic happiness, for any advantage of a political nature! Besides, what is the great object of all true policy; but to give men the secure possession of their private rights, and individual enjoyments?

The second great objection to the moral maxims of *Plato* is his allowing of perjury in matters of love. "The laws of God," he says, "allow of oaths," meaning a breach of oaths,

“in affairs of love.”* “God,” he says, “pardons those who perjure themselves with respect to love, as if they were children, and did not know what they did.”† It appears too, that the laws of *Athens* took no cognizance of these oaths. But the law of God, in our Scriptures, makes no such distinction. It requires the strictest performance of every oath.

Plato, in his books on the *Republic*, censures with much severity the vice of sodomy, which was too generally practised in *Greece*. “We must abstain,” he says, “from all commerce with males. For this is being worse than birds and beasts, among which the males have no commerce with other males, but with females only; and if it be not concealed from both men and women, the criminal may be punished by deprivation of all civil offices, and be treated like a foreigner.”‡ This, however, is prescribing a very mild and inadequate punishment for the most abominable of crimes.

Notwithstanding this, he says, that “on an expedition soldiers should be allowed unbounded licence both with respect to women and boys, as by this means they will be more inflamed to gain the victory,”§ meaning, that with the expectation of this indulgence, they will be more ready to enlist, and to engage in any hazardous enterprise.

The laws of *Moses* and of *God* relating to war are very different from this. According to them, wherever men are, in peace or in war, the same rules of morality are binding upon them, and the same punishment awaits the infringement of them.

SECTION V.

Of Death, and the Consequence of it.

In what *Plato* says on the subject of death, and the consequence of it, we see the stress that he laid on the practice of virtue in general, though without distinguishing particular virtues or vices; and if he may be understood literally, his sentiments are decidedly in favour of a future state of retribution, in which individuals will retain their separate consciousness, at least till their proper rewards or punishments are completed. But much of what he advances on this subject has such a mixture of imagination and of popular

* *Convivium*. (P.)

† *De Legibus*, L. viii. (P.)

‡ *Hippias Major*. (P.)

§ *De Repub.* (P.)

notions, that many persons entertain doubts of his writing what he really thought.

“It is impossible,” he says, “that there should be much happiness in this life; but there is great hope that after death every person may obtain the things that he most wishes for. Nor is this new, but known both to the Greeks and Barbarians.”* This is the only passage that I have found in the writings of *Plato*, in which he lays any stress on the argument from general consent, or tradition, in favour of the reality of a future state; and here he intimates some degree of doubt, by only saying that there is *great hope* with respect to it. In other places he expresses more.

“In truth,” he says, “the soul of each of us is immortal, and goes to other gods, to give an account of its actions, as the laws of our country express; which gives the greatest confidence to good men, and terror to the wicked, lest they should suffer the greatest punishments after death for the crimes committed in this life.”† “A happy man,” he says, “will learn all that he can from nature, persuaded that thus he will live most happily, and when he dies he will go to a place suited to his virtue; and being thus truly initiated, and having acquired true wisdom, will pass the rest of his life in the contemplation of the most beautiful objects. Justice is the best reward of the soul, and we should not envy it those rewards of justice and universal virtue, which God has prepared for it in this life or the next.”‡ “The gods,” he adds, “must know who are just, and who are unjust, and must love the one and hate the other, and they will give to their friends every good that is in their power.”§

Plato introduces one of his speakers in addressing a young man licentiously disposed, in the following manner: “O young man, who think that you are overlooked by the gods, consider that there is a seat of justice with the gods who dwell in heaven, that they who are wicked may join the wicked, and they who are good may join the good, in life and in death, and do and suffer what others like them do and suffer. Neither, therefore, do you, or any other person, presume that you will be happy, so as to escape or brave the justice of God. You are not overlooked by him, though you should go to the bottom of the earth, or ascend into the heavens, but shall suffer according to your deserts, whether here, in the infernal regions, or in some distant place.”||

* *Epinomis.* (P.) † *De Legibus*, L. xii. (P.) ‡ *Epinomis.* (P.)
§ *De Repub.* L. x. (P.) || *De Legibus*, L. x. (P.)

This, however, being the address of an old citizen to a young one, may be nothing more than popular language, calculated to reclaim him from his vices, which would be injurious to the state; using such arguments as, whether thought to have any weight by the speaker or not, might make some impression on the hearer.

The state of those who die in battle, in the service of their country, Plato gives on the authority of Hesiod, saying, "If Hesiod may be believed, they become terrestrial dæmons, expellers of evil, and the guardians of mankind."* For this, therefore, he does not make himself responsible.

Plato gives such an account of the state of souls after death, with the various periods of their purifications and transmigrations, as it is possible he might have heard in the *East*, but such as it was impossible he could be in earnest in professing his belief of.

"Souls do not," he says, "return to the source from which they came, in less than ten thousand years. For they do not recover their wings till that time, except the souls of those who truly philosophize, and who love boys" (meaning, probably, sensual pleasure in general) "and wisdom at the same time. These perform it in the third circuit of a thousand years; if after this they three times choose this life, thus recovering their wings after three thousand years. But other souls are judged after the first term of life, some of them going to a place of judgment under the earth, to suffer according to their deserts, others ascending to a place in the heavens suited to their merit when they were in the form of men. These, after a thousand years, take their choice again, some the life of a brute, and again that of man, provided it had formerly been the soul of a man. For souls that have not seen truth cannot assume that form."† This particular period of three thousand years *Herodotus* had from the priests of *Egypt*, who said that "when the soul had gone through bodies of every kind, terrestrial, marine, and also those of birds, it entered again into that of a man, and that this was accomplished in the space of three thousand years. This account," he adds, "some Greeks, whose names he forebore to mention, claim as their own."‡

Still less can we think *Plato* to have given any credit to the following very absurd relation, which, however, he recites at full length, and without intimating any doubt of

* *De Repub.* L. v. (P.)

† *Euterpe*, L. ii. C. cxxiii. (P.)

† *Phædrus.* (P.)

its truth. It is the story of one *Eris*, of *Armenia*, who, after having lain dead on the field of battle twelve days, came to life, and then related what he said he had seen in the infernal regions, the whole agreeable to the fables of the poets, with many absurd additions; as that of the souls of particular persons choosing to pass into the bodies of different animals, that of *Ajax*, into a lion, that of *Orpheus* into a swan, from his hatred of women, that of *Thamyris* into a nightingale, and that of *Agamemnon* into an eagle, &c. &c.*

As *Plato's* account of a future state has such a mixture of fancy and fable, and so little support from *argument*, his declaration of his belief of it will admit of much doubt, as well as what he says of the immortality of the soul in general. They were *Eastern* doctrines, to this day firmly believed by the *Hindoos* and others, though *Plato* gives no intimation whence he had them. But excepting this doubtful case of *Plato* himself, they never gained any degree of credit in the *West*.

How happy, then, should we think ourselves, and how thankful to God, for the glorious light of the gospel, which leaves us under no doubt or uncertainty with respect to a future life in general, or the different conditions of the righteous and the wicked in it; and especially for that most satisfactory evidence of it in the death and resurrection of *Jesus*, as furnishing at the same time a *proof*, and also a *pattern* of a future universal resurrection; when *all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of Man and come forth, some to the resurrection of life, and others to that of condemnation*; and when *all men shall receive according to their works!* What weight has the mere opinion of *Plato*, or that of any Heathen philosophers, admitting them to have been ever so much in earnest, compared to this?

We find nothing in our Scriptures concerning the fanciful doctrine of *pre-existence*, or of the state of souls separate from the body; but are assured that as *the man* dies, the whole man shall rise again, with a perfect recollection of all that he had done, and therefore satisfied with respect to the state to which he will be sentenced corresponding to it. And this is all that we are at present concerned to know. It follows from this that we shall know our friends as well as ourselves. *Jesus* assured his apostles, that then *they should be with him wherever he should be, and see and partake*

of his glory, and that this will also be shared *by all who believe on him through their word*, that is, all sincere Christians, to the end of the world. We are also assured, that all those who shall *suffer with him* shall also *reign with him for ever*. What ample encouragement is this to a life of virtue, and how will it enable us to bear all the troubles of this life, and the pains of death, be they what they may, with such an expectation ! This is such *hope and joy set before us*, as was set before Jesus himself, and by which he was enabled to bear his cross, and to make no account of the shame of that ignominious, as well as painful, death.

OF THE

PHILOSOPHY OF ARISTOTLE.

INTRODUCTION.

ARISTOTLE was the disciple of *Plato*,* but he appears to have been greatly superior to him, and indeed to all the other *Grecian* philosophers, in genius and good sense.† He had also considerable advantage from having been tutor to *Alexander the Great*, and from being assisted by him in the study of nature, which was wholly neglected by all the other philosophers ; as they confined themselves to subjects of mere speculation, which requires little or no knowledge of external things.

Aristotle, however, himself followed them too closely in their own track ; and he seems to have taken great pleasure in collecting and confuting all their sentiments ; insomuch that, if he could be depended upon, it would be easy to ascertain the opinions of all the philosophers who had preceded him ; but he is said to have greatly misrepresented them, in order to make it the more easy for him to expose and confute them, which it is evident he took much pleasure in doing, that his own opinions might appear the more ori-

* " At the age of seventeen." *Enfield*, (B. ii. Ch. ix. Sect. i.,) I. p. 256.

† " Plato used to call him the *Mind of the School*, and to say when he was absent, ' Intellect is not here.' " *Ibid*.

ginal and respectable. Never perhaps, was so much genius employed on more useless subjects than in all that we see in the greater part of the writings of Aristotle. The works of *Thomas Aquinas*, and the Christian schoolmen, are, in this respect, far inferior to his; but the subjects are much more important, and the trifling, as well as the subtlety, less. *

Though the reading of the disquisitions of *Aristotle* on theological and metaphysical subjects be unspeakably tiresome, so that, probably, no person in this age, who has any proper idea of the value of his time, will ever read a tenth part of them; many of his conclusions and summaries are clear and striking; far more so than those of *Plato*, without affecting his sublimity, the art of his dialogues, or the elegance of his style; his aim seeming to have been nothing more than to express his own ideas, such as they were, in the most intelligible language. At least, so it appears to me, notwithstanding his acknowledging to *Alexander* that though he had published his opinions, they were in fact not published, as only those who had been particularly instructed by him could understand them.

This may be true with respect to some of his writings, but it certainly is not so with respect to the generality of them; and of this the extracts that I shall make from many of them will enable the reader to judge for himself, in what he writes concerning the Supreme Being, the human soul, and the nature of virtue and vice; which are all that, in this work, I propose to consider; as nothing else in the writings of the Heathen philosophers is of such a nature as that it can be brought into comparison with the doctrine of our Scriptures; since the bulk of their writings relates to subjects which probably never entered the thoughts of any of the sacred writers, and indeed were the least important in themselves, being frivolous in the extreme.

It has been usual to class *Aristotle* among *Atheists*, and his writings, as translated and commented upon by *Averroes*, in a later period, † were the great source of modern Atheism and Infidelity; but I do not see any pretence for this charge in the writings of *Aristotle* himself; for in them the being and general providence of God are more distinctly asserted than in the writings of *Plato*; and what is particularly remarkable is, that, whereas *Plato* uses the term *God* and

* See Vol. III. pp. 349, 350, 365; Vol. IX. p. 466.

† See Vol. IX. p. 449; Vol. X. p. 80; Vol. XVI. pp. 109, 110, 413.

gods promiscuously, the latter never, I believe, occurs in any of the works of *Aristotle*, except once in his treatise on riches and vices, in which he evidently alludes to the popular religion. In all his serious writings he uses the term *God* (Θεός) and never any other that implies plurality; and yet in this he was not followed by the *Stoics*, or any other philosophers. If he was an *Atheist*, he must not only have concealed, but have denied and confuted his own opinions in many parts of his writings, when he had not the least occasion to do it, as they are not calculated, as those of *Plato* evidently were, for the generality of readers. They are also written in such a manner as not to be at all inviting to readers in general, independently of the extreme abstruseness of the subject; so that they could only have been read by persons well versed in the philosophy of the times. Besides, it is of more importance to my object to ascertain what were the opinions of the readers than those of the writers; and those are most likely to be found in such of their works as were calculated for general use. To my object, the private sentiments of any particular man, and such as he did not think proper to divulge or explain, are of no consequence whatever. I want to ascertain the opinions of the disciples, and of the sect in general.

SECTION I.

Of the Being, the Attributes, and the Providence of God.

THE reader, I am confident, will be surprised, as well as pleased, with many passages in the various writings of *Aristotle*, expressing his opinions concerning the nature, the attributes, and the providence of God. "God," he says, "is the most powerful Being, immortal, and of perfect virtue; and though by nature invisible to all perishable things, he is seen in his works, as in the air, in the earth, and in the water; for whatever is done in them is the work of God."*

He expresses his approbation of those who say, that "God is from eternity, and the best of beings, and that life, and a continuance of existence is in him."† So far was *Aristotle* from representing God as of the same rank and nature with the heavenly bodies, or from giving any portion of divinity to them, that he says, "God conducts the stars

* *De Mundo*, C. vi. (P.)

† *Metaphysics*, L. xii. C. vii. (P.)

according to number," that is, with regularity; and that on this account he may be called their "Coryphæus."*

Aristotle was even a professed advocate for the unity of God, and as I have observed before, [pp. 460, 461,] he never, in expressing his own sentiments, uses the term *gods*, but always that of *God*. "There is," he says, "but one God," though he has obtained many names, according to his different attributes. By the appellations of Ζην and Δία united, is signified, that in him we live. He is *Saturn* and *Chronos*, as having existed from eternity. He is also called the thunderer, the giver of rain, &c. It can only be God that is to be understood in the Orphic hymns. He is also called Fate, from things proceeding in a connected series; and Nemesis, as possessed of a divine power, which he exercises as he pleases; Adrastias, as the cause of every thing in nature, which no person can deceive or avoid; and Æsas, because he exists always. What is said of the *Parcæ* must be explained in the same manner. Finally, God, holding the beginning, the middle, and the end of all things, operates according to nature, accompanied by justice, called Διxη, the vindicator of the divine law when it is violated. And he who would obtain a happy life must be a partaker of divinity from the beginning;"† meaning, that he must derive it from God.

The popular opinion of a multiplicity of gods, *Aristotle* explains in the following manner: "The heavens (*οὐρανοί*) are one, but it has been handed down to us by our ancestors and the ancients, and left in the form of figure to posterity, that these are gods, and that every part of nature has divinity in it. Other things too of a fabulous nature are told to the multitude, to induce them to obey the laws; for they say that the gods are in the form of men, and of other animals," &c.‡

Aristotle's doctrine concerning the providence of God he introduces by an account of an old tradition, which he says prevailed among their ancestors and all men, that "every thing was made by God and out of God." He adds, as from the same tradition, which is better founded, that "nothing can be well or safely conducted, without his care and providence."§

His account of the relation that God bears to the world, as its supreme governor, is peculiarly striking; considering

* *De Mundo*, C. vi. (P.)

† *Ibid.* C. vii. (P.)

‡ *Metaphysics*, L. xii. C. viii. (P.)

§ *De Mundo*, C. vi. (P.)

the little light the Heathens had on this most important subject. "What the pilot is in a ship," he says, "what the charioteer is in his chariot, what the precentor is in a chorus, what the law is in a state, or a general in his army, God is in the world. What manifold labour, motion, and care would there be without this! Whereas with him every thing succeeds without labour, without trouble, or infirmity of body. For, being situated in a steady and immoveable situation, every thing is moved at his pleasure, according to the different forms and natures of things. In this he resembles the law in a state, which, being immoveable, governs every thing in the state, all the magistrates having their proper place and province under it; but he is greatly superior to, and more stable than our laws; for by him the whole world of heaven is administered and governed. All animals obey his laws, and even reptiles that feed upon the earth."*

It will be seen in the following passage that *Aristotle* had not the same, or equally just, ideas of the operations and providence of God that we are taught in our Scriptures. "God," he says, "is the preserver of every thing that is done in the world, and also the author of it, without being affected by weariness, as a human workman, or an animal, and of things at a distance as well as near; for having his seat in the highest region, from which he is called the supreme (Υπαρῶν), those bodies which are nearest to him feel the most of his power; but I cannot think him concerned in things that are low and mean; but that rather, like the king of Persia, he knows and acts by his agents. Thus he moves the sun, and moon, and the whole heavens, and is the author of every thing that is safe and salutary in the world. Not that he stands in need of the assistance of others, as he does every thing without difficulty, with a simple motion."†

I would observe on this, that philosophy, as well as true piety, considers every thing in the universe as, in a proper sense, *equal* in the eye of God, who made the smallest things as well as the greatest, as equally subservient to his purpose. *Moses* represents him as having made by the exertion of the same power, reptiles as well as men, the grass of the fields as well as the largest trees, and all these as well as the sun, moon, and stars. *He said, Let them be, and they rose into existence.* David represents all animals, as well as men,

* *De Mundo*, C. vi. (P.)† *Ibid.* (P.)

as equally dependent upon God, even for their daily food ; when he says, [*Psalm* civ. 21,] “ The young lions roar *over* their prey, and seek their meat from God ;” that he *feedeth the ravens, when they cry*, [cxlvii. 9,] and that *all creatures have their eyes up unto him*, and he *satisfies* “ the desire of every living thing.” [cxlv. 15, 16.] Agreeably to this, Jesus says, [*Matt.* x. 29,] *a sparrow falls not to the ground without him*, and it is he that so beautifully clothes the lilies of the field.

So incomprehensible has the doctrine of the universal presence and constant agency of *one mind* been thought by the generality of mankind, who are apt to judge of all intellects by their own, that many of the most intelligent and speculative of men have thought it necessary to provide him with some assistant, or assistants, in his extensive and various operations. Hence the origin of idolatry in general, from its being thought absolutely impossible that one mind should apprehend and attend to every thing. Hence the ideas of *Plato* were improved into the notion of *a second God*, the *Δημιουργος*, or immediate agent in the work of creation ; and hence also the Christian *Logos*, as a being separate from the Deity, and the still prevailing opinion, that it was not God the Father, but Christ, who made the world, and the universe in general. *Aristotle*, therefore, must be excused in adopting this idea, as he was not singular in it. It also appeared to many others, as well as to him, that it was more *honourable* to the Supreme Being to suppose him not to be immediately concerned in any thing that is low or mean.

Even some Christian philosophers seem still to be entangled in this idea, when they speak of the operation of *general laws*, as if they could relieve the Deity from any part of his immediate agency ; for what are laws or general rules in the hands of those who have no power to execute them ? Why should a stone, for example, move towards the earth ? It is said, by the law of gravity. But what is that law, or any other law of nature, without a power of agency ? There must, therefore, be an universal agency of the Author of nature through the whole extent of his works, the meanest, as they appear to us, as well as the greatest. And what we call general laws cannot be any thing else than his general mode of acting, or exerting his power and influence. Incomprehensible as this must ever appear to us, it is not the only circumstance relating to the Supreme Being that is so. In fact, all his attributes, and especially his eternal and

necessary existence, must ever be so to finite minds, that is, to all beings except to himself.

There is another work ascribed to *Aristotle*, not now extant in *Greek*, but said to have been translated from the *Greek* into *Arabic*, and thence from the *Arabic* into the *Latin*, in which we now have it; purporting to contain the doctrine of the Egyptians concerning God and nature, which I have not yet quoted.* Indeed, it appears highly improbable that *Aristotle* should have written the whole of it, though the minuteness and subtlety of the discussions contained in it, very much resemble his usual manner of writing.

Some of the sentiments in this work could not have been either those of *Aristotle*, or of any sect of philosophers, *Egyptian* or others, that existed in his time, especially what he says concerning the *word of God*. “The express word of God, is the cause of all causes, and such was the opinion of the Babylonians.”† “Again, the true word of divine wisdom is the most powerful of all. Who, then, can comprehend its majesty and power? It is as that of a prince. In this word every thing is to be seen, and from this all power of procreation flows.”‡

There are, however, two passages in this work which, as being sufficiently agreeable to the sentiments of *Aristotle* quoted above, may deserve to be recited: “God,” he says, “knows all things, past, present, and to come, as their maker and governor, himself remaining without motion.”§ This, however, is not perfectly agreeable to the sentiments of *Aristotle*, as we have seen. The next passage is not consistent with itself, as it represents the Divine Being as having produced every thing first without any instrumentality of other beings, and then with it.

“The Supreme Creator” (*Artifex*) “imitates no created being, but produces forms inimitable by any. Nor does he make use of any instrument in this, but performs every thing by his own power. God, therefore, whose name be exalted, produced the universe without any consultation or wandering of thought. He first produced an only substance, viz. the *acting intellect*, which he adorned with light most bright and most excellent of all created things, and by this intermediate being the highest orb was produced, which contains intelligence and souls. By the same are changes

* “De secretiore Parte divinæ Sapientiæ secundum Ægyptios,” L. xiv. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. x. C. xix. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* L. xiv. C. xii. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* L. iii. C. viii. (P.)

made in the lower world.”* The clause, *whose name be praised*, introduced after the mention of that of God, is evidently not Heathen, but the language of a *Jew* or a *Mahometan*.

Notwithstanding the justness of *Aristotle's* sentiments in general, concerning the being, and especially of the providence of God, he was so entangled by his metaphysical maxims, that he did not make him the *first mover* in the universe; but assigned this province, seemingly the most important of all, to something independent of him; but to this first mover he never attributes any proper intelligence. “The first mover,” he says, “itself simple and immoveable, but moving other bodies in infinite time, has neither parts nor magnitude, since nothing finite can have moved in infinite time, and magnitude cannot be infinite.”† To support this, he maintains at large, that it is not necessary that that which is the mover should itself have any motion.‡ “By a simple nod of the first mover,” he says, “all compound substances are moved, being their superior and master.”§

But it is surely difficult to form any idea of a being or substance, at the same time without magnitude and without motion, and also without intelligence, whatever he meant by the *nod* above-mentioned; for this he gives exclusively to God, who, according to him, was active from all eternity. Being, however, satisfied that something must have existed from eternity, and that whatever was moved must have had both a mover and a beginning of motion, he was necessarily led to think that the first Being must have been immoveable; and as he must have been from eternity, he must, according to the other of his metaphysical maxims, have been without magnitude, which, he says, is necessarily finite. But these were only metaphysical and vague notions, which do not appear to have materially affected his general ideas concerning the being of God, his attributes or his providence, on which he enlarges greatly, and seemingly with much satisfaction.

SECTION II.

Of the Human Soul.

THOUGH *Aristotle* writes very largely concerning the soul, and, according to his custom, proposes and answers a variety

* *Ægypt.* L. xiv. C. xv. (P.)

† *De Anima*, L. i. C. iii. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* L. viii. C. x. (P.)

§ *De Caelo*, L. i. C. ii. (P.)

of subtle questions relating to it, his sentiments on the subject are by no means evident, except that they are different from those of *Plato*, who preceded him, and those of the *Stoics* who came after him. Indeed, on all subjects he seems to have taken pleasure in differing from all others, and appearing as the author of a system of his own.

Though *Aristotle* did not, with many other philosophers, consider the soul as the whole of a man's self, he acknowledged it to be the principal part (*αρχή*) of a man. "It is so," he says, "of all animals."* "The intellect is immiscible with the body, but the latter has its senses, as the instruments of it."† He did not think so meanly of the body as not to be of opinion that it had some properties in common with the soul. "The soul," he says, "has all its affection in common with the body, as anger, gentleness, compassion, confidence, joy, hatred, and lastly, love; because in all these cases the body suffers as well as the mind."‡

The motion of the intellect is always said to consist in *thinking*, so that when this operation ceases, the soul ceases to exist. He therefore says, "The intellect is always in motion, and an equable one."§

According to a metaphysical distinction of *Aristotle*, and I believe peculiar to him, every substance consists of *matter* and *form*. "What then," says he, "is the essence of the soul? If it is said to be *form*, it is said wisely and rationally, being part of the compound, and not the whole."|| These two last quotations are from that work of *Aristotle* which I have observed to be of doubtful authority. I find, however, a better (though the account is not so clear) in his *De Anima*, where he says, "They think justly who are of opinion that the soul is to be classed with forms. It is not, however, wholly place, but intellectual, nor does it consist in act, but in the power of the forms."¶ This last expression is to me wholly unintelligible. But the opinion that the soul is the form of the body, whatever was really meant by it, was the common language first of the *Christian* Aristotelians, and then of *unbelievers*, on the revival of the *Aristotelian* philosophy in the *West*. It was condemned at the twelfth Council of *Lateran*.**

* *De Anima*, L. i. C. i. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. i. C. i. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* L. xii. C. xiii. (P.)

** See Vol. IX. p. 377.

† *Ibid.* L. iii. C. iv. (P.)

§ *Ægypt.* L. viii. C. iv. (P.)

¶ *De Anima*, L. iii. C. iv. (P.)

Like all other philosophers, *Aristotle* considered the soul as consisting of different parts, each having its peculiar functions. “Nothing,” he says, “is very clear concerning the intellectual or contemplative part of the soul; but it seems to be another kind of soul, and that this is separable,” (meaning from its other faculties,) “immortal, and incorruptible.”* “The soul,” he says, “is divisible into two parts, that which has reason, and that which is without reason” (which he must have learned from the *Pythagoreans*). “In the part which has reason, are the virtues of prudence, wisdom, genius, memory, &c.; but in the part which has not reason, temperance, fortitude, justice, and whatever else is praiseworthy in the class of virtues; since on account of these we are deemed worthy of praise.”† Here he gives to a part of the soul the same properties that other philosophers more generally give to the animal part of a man, of which, however, he makes no distinct mention, though he does of another part, which he calls *vegetative*, not acknowledged by any others, who, in their definitions of man, never descend lower than the principle of animal nature. “A part of the soul,” he says, “we call vegetative, of which plants partake, for the soul is the principle ($\alpha\rho\chi\eta$) of all vegetative sensation, intellect, and motion.”‡

What *Aristotle* is represented as saying in the doubtful treatise mentioned before, favours the idea which prevailed at the revival of his philosophy, of a *common principle of life and motion*, though not directly of *intelligence*, pervading all nature, and resolvable into its source at the death of each individual. “Plants and animals,” he says, “besides that soul which is peculiar to each, enjoy the life of the common soul; because they cannot give aliment to others without parting with their own lives.”§ “The first author of form,” he says, “gave reason to the common soul.”|| He even says, that this is the *principle of life*, though he does not call it a *soul*. It is in all the elements, “in fire, air, and water.” Here, however, he allows a separate individual soul to each, besides a participation in the common soul.

The doctrine of the *pre-existence of souls*, and of their descent into mortal bodies, I do not find mentioned in any of the genuine writings of *Aristotle*; but it is mentioned

* *De Anima*, L. ii. C. ii. (P.)

† *De Anima*, L. ii. C. ii. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* (P.)

† *Magna Moralia*, L. i. C. v. (P.)

§ *Ægypt.* L. viii. C. ii. (P.)

in the doubtful treatise quoted above, in the exordium to which he says, "We shall then describe the descent of souls into bodies, and their ascent."* But I do not find that he does this in any part of this treatise.

Concerning the state of the soul, or of the man, after death, *Aristotle* is nearly silent; and what he does say, or rather hint, is expressive of much doubt. "If any thing," he says, "be enjoyed by the dead, whether good or evil, it must be very little, either in itself, or to them; not sufficient to make them happy or unhappy, who were not so before."† This with respect to the souls, or the shades, of the virtuous, is pretty nearly the sentiment which *Homer* puts into the mouth of *Achilles* in the *Elysian* fields; who says, he had rather be a slave to the meanest person upon earth, than king of all in the regions below.‡

SECTION III.

Of Happiness, and of Virtue and Vice.

ARISTOTLE's ideas of happiness, and of things that should be classed among *goods* or *evils*, are very different from those of the *Stoics* who came after him, and, as may be inferred from what he says, those of many who preceded him; but they are far more agreeable to reason and the common sense of mankind.

In consequence of his making more account of the body than other philosophers of his time did, he justly observes that, "if good be *one*," which he says is the common opinion, "or a thing separate from every other, and independent of every other, it cannot be procured by man, or depend upon any actions of his."§ "Some kinds of good," he says, "relate to the soul and the virtues, and some to the body, as health, beauty, and other external things, opulence," &c. || "It is agreed by all," he says, "that grief (λύπη) is an evil, and to be avoided. For, whatever is to be avoided is an evil, and whatever is to be pursued is a good."¶ "It is not easy," he farther says, "for him to be completely happy, who is either remarkably deformed, or of mean condition, or who lives a solitary life, or is without children; and much

* *Ægypt.* L. i. C. i. (P.)

† See Vol. II. pp. 98, 99.

|| *Mag. Mor.* L. i. C. iii. (P.)

¶ *To Eudemus*, L. vi. C. xiii. (P.) "Ascribed by some to *Theophrastus*."

See *Enfield* (B. ii. Ch. ix. Sect. i.), I. p. 264.

† *De Moribus*, L. i. C. xi. (P.)

§ *De Moribus*, L. i. C. iv. (P.)

less if he have children that are very profligate. Some, therefore, place happiness in outward prosperity, and some in virtue. He, therefore, must be pronounced happy, who is both virtuous and possessed of external goods.”* In this opinion he would now, I believe, have the general concurrence of mankind.

On the subject of *virtues and vices*, the ideas of *Aristotle* are peculiar to himself, but he was certainly at liberty to make his own definitions, though this may lead to mistake when they are different from those that are commonly received. Now virtue is, I believe, universally considered as the property of the soul, independent of any thing relating to the body, and dependent only on the will and intention, arising from the inward disposition of the mind. But it is not so with *Aristotle*. He considers every circumstance that is *reputable*, and that makes a man appear to advantage in the eyes of others, as a virtue (*αρετη*), and every thing that is disreputable, as a vice. His general definition is, that whatever is commendable is virtuous, and vice the contrary. Thus, under the head of liberality, besides what we call *generosity*, he includes “neatness in dress, elegance in a house,” and this, he says, “without any regard to utility. He also is to be classed among the liberal who keeps animals for pleasure, or for the sake of being admired.”†

After mentioning *Plato*’s division of the soul into three parts, he assigns the virtues peculiar to each of them. “Of the *rational* part of man,” he says, “the virtue is prudence; of the animal, the virtues (*θυμοειδους*) are gentleness and fortitude; of the concupiscible part (*επιθυμητικου*), the virtues of temperance and continence; and those of the whole soul are justice, liberality, and magnanimity.”‡ I do not, however, find the above-mentioned division of the faculties of the soul in the works of *Plato*.

Aristotle’s ideas of justice were much more extensive than those of most other philosophers, or perhaps those of statesmen. “The first justice,” he says, “respects the gods; the next the dæmons; then those relating to our country and our parents; and the last the dead, in which is included piety, which is either a part of justice or follows it.”§

This is the only passage in the works of *Aristotle* in which mention is made of *gods*, and here he evidently means such gods as were acknowledged by his country. However, the

* *De Moribus*, L. i. C. ix. xi. (P.)

† *Ibid.* (P.)

‡ *De Virtutibus et Vitiis.* (P.)

§ *Ibid.* (P.)

neglect or contempt of these rites of worship, whatever they were, he would have punished: "It is injustice," he adds, "to violate the custom and institution of our country, and not to obey the laws and the magistrates."* This includes the principle of persecution for religious opinions and practices, which *Aristotle*, no doubt, held, in common with all the philosophers and magistrates of his time, so that nothing better could reasonably be expected of him.

Thus we have seen the result of the speculation and laborious researches of the most acute and sagacious of all the *Grecian* philosophers, of a man who, with respect both to genius and industry, may be classed among the first of mankind, on these most important subjects. But notwithstanding the marks of superior good sense and discernment in the writings of *Aristotle*, we do not find in them any real advance in theological or moral science. And as to any *practical use* of his doctrines, it appears to be something less than the world was in possession of before.

As to the great object of Heathen philosophy in general, which was to enable men to bear the evils of life, and the fear or the pains of death, he never, that I recollect, so much as mentions the subject, but treats of generation and dissolution merely as natural *phenomena*, to be explained upon physical principles; but he never regards them in a moral light. On the consequence of death, and a state of retribution after it, he is likewise wholly silent; probably from not believing any thing either of the notions of the vulgar, or the refined speculations of *Plato*. Had the subjects been much upon his mind, he must have treated of them, and with seriousness, as in themselves highly interesting to himself, as well as to the rest of mankind.

What is peculiarly remarkable in *Aristotle* is, that though he *reasons* much, and disputes with wonderful subtlety, he seems to have *felt* nothing. He never expresses himself with any warmth, or any degree of sensibility, when he is treating of the most important subjects; but writes concerning God, and the soul, and of virtue and vice, with as much coolness as he describes his plants and animals. How different, in this respect, as well as in many others, are the writings of *Aristotle* from the *Psalms of David*, the writings of the prophets, and other devotional and moral articles in the books of Scripture, penned by men of no uncommon

* *De Virtutibus et Vitiis. (P.)*

ability of any kind, but deeply impressed with the importance of the subjects on which they write, and having more knowledge of them! They know infinitely more of God, and of his constant attention to the affairs of men, individuals as well as nations, and therefore they write as if they were feally sensible of his presence with them, and his unremitted attention to them, as the proper author of all the good and evil that fell to their lot. They regarded him not only as their moral governor, and final judge, but as their Father, and their Friend; and thence were led to address themselves to him on all interesting occasions.

What is there, in this respect, in all the Heathen writings to compare with the language of the *Psalms*?* To quote a few verses out of thousands, I shall just transcribe the beginning of *Psalm* cxvi.: "I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my supplications. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live. The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow: Then called I upon the name of the Lord, O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul."

I am tempted to add the beginning of *Psalm* cxxxix.: "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and my uprising. Thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassed my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it."

This is language that comes from the *heart*, implying a feeling sense of the intimate presence and constant inspection of God, naturally producing a *direct address* to him, which does not appear ever to have been made by any of the philosophers.† Their feelings, therefore, must have been very different. Supposing them to have been the same in *kind*, they must have been unspeakably different in *degree*. Their acknowledgment of the universal presence of God must have been mere speculation, and rested, as we say, in the head, but never reached the heart. But this strikes us in every *Psalm of David*.

* See Vol. XII. p. 66.

† See *Ibid.* p. 117.



OF THE
STOICAL PHILOSOPHY
OF
MARCUS ANTONINUS AND EPICTETUS.

THE *Stoic* philosophy, the founder of which was *Zeno*, who flourished about three hundred years before Christ, and a little after *Aristotle*, arose a considerable time after *Socrates*, and it is on several accounts the most respectable of all the Heathen systems, especially as it regards the being and providence of God, and the submission we owe to it, patience in adversity, and resignation to death. It was soon opposed by the doctrine of *Epicurus*, which made *pleasure*, though not sensual pleasure, but rather the enjoyment of life in general, the great object and end of human life; whereas, according to the *Stoics*, pleasure of every kind, as well as pain, is to be ranked among things *indifferent*, and not to be attended to in the great rule of life.

When the *Grecian* philosophy was introduced into *Rome*, some of the most virtuous and respectable characters embraced that of the *Stoics*, in preference to any other; especially *Cato*, and in a later period the emperor *Marcus Antoninus*, who made what he deemed to be virtue, and whatever he thought to be subservient to the good of his country, more an object than any other of the emperors, or almost any other Heathen that we read of. It will, therefore, be well worth while to examine the fundamental principles of this philosophy; as this alone can come in any competition with the Christian. And as the fairest specimen of it may be seen in the writings of *Marcus Antoninus* and *Epictetus*, I shall, in this place, confine myself to the examination of their works, in which we may be sure to find the genuine principles of it without any danger of mistake. *Seneca*, indeed, and *Arrian*, came before *Marcus Antoninus*, and their principles were those of the *Stoics*. But there is too much of rhetoric in their compositions, especially those of *Seneca*, whereas the writings of the emperor came, no

doubt, from the heart, and express neither more nor less than he really thought. However, I shall subjoin to this Section an account of the sentiments of *Seneca* and *Arrian*.

SECTION I.

Of God and Providence.

It was a fixed maxim with the *Stoics*, as it was with *Socrates*, from whom none of the founders of sects that came after him pretended to differ, that there is a principle of intelligence, wisdom, and also of benevolence, directing all the affairs of the world and of men, though they do not ascribe proper *creation* to it. Sometimes they even speak of it in the singular number, though more generally in the plural; believing that, though the principle of intelligence was *one*, it was distributed to several individuals, and indeed to men, and all other intelligent agents.

But none of the philosophers adopted the popular ideas of the gods of their country. Though they sometimes make use of the same *names*, (and this is not frequent,) they had a very different idea of their *characters*. In their writings we find nothing of the lewdness, the cruelty, and caprice of the gods of *Homer* and *Virgil*; nor do they ever make any apology for rejecting the notions of the common people.

This unity of principle in all the orders of intelligent beings would, in the opinion of the philosophers, secure the *unity of design* in the whole system that was subordinate to them, and governed by them. "There is," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "one world, one God in all things, one matter, and one law. Consequently, reason in all intelligent beings is the same in all, and truth also is one."*

He makes use, though only once, of the name of Jupiter as that of the Supreme Being, when he speaks of the principle of intelligence in all men as derived from one source. "We should live," he says, "with the gods; and this any person will do who preserves his mind in a disposition to acquiesce in what is appointed him, and who acts according to that genius, which Jupiter, having detached it from himself, gives to every person to be his future guide and commander, which is every person's mind, or reason."† He evidently considered the sun as a portion of the universal

* *De Rebus suis*, L. vii. Sect. ix. (P.) *Meditations*, Ed. Glasgow, 1742, p. 162.

† *De Reb.* L. v. Sect. xxviii. (P.) *Med.* p. 130.

Deity, when he says, "The sun, and the other gods, exist for some purpose or other."*

That this universal mind has a perfect knowledge of all things, even of what passes in the minds of men, was the belief of the Stoics, as well as of Socrates. "God," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "sees all minds divested of their coverings and flesh. By his own mind alone he sees them as derived from him. If you will do the same, you will be freed from much trouble."† For believing that all minds are only parts of one whole, he ascribes to them all much of the same power, as we shall see more particularly hereafter.

He, however, takes it for granted that all good and evil are the dispensation of the gods, and therefore he holds it as a fixed maxim to be thankful for the former, and patiently to bear the latter. "I thank God," he says, "for good grandfathers, good parents, good preceptors, good acquaintance, domestics, and friends, and for good of every other kind."‡ "If," says he, "the gods take no care of the world, which it is impiety to believe, why do we sacrifice, pray, take oaths, and do other things which suppose the gods to be present with us, and attentive to us?"§

The Heathens in general, without excepting any of the philosophers, except *Epicurus*, were disposed to believe that the gods interposed in the affairs of man, giving him admonitions, and suggestions by dreams, omens, oracles, and various other ways. "With respect to the gods," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "their suggestions, and the aids and inspirations that come from them, nothing hinders my living according to the rule of nature, unless it be my fault, in not observing those hints from the gods, which are sometimes obscure."||

He seems sometimes, however, to consider such an order of things established from all eternity as would render all prayer, sacrifices, &c. useless. "Whatever happens to you," he says, "was destined for you from all eternity."¶ "This," he says, "was done, by a certain fate."** And again, "the series of causes combined with one another, connects your existence with that event from all eternity." This, how-

* *De Reb. L. viii. Sect. xix. (P.) Med. p. 190.*

† *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. ii. (P.) Med. p. 280.*

‡ *De Reb. L. i. Sect. xiv. (P.) Med. p. 58.*

§ *De Reb. L. vi. Sect. xlv. (P.) Med. p. 155.*

|| *De Reb. L. i. Sect. xiv. (P.) Med. p. 60.*

¶ *De Reb. L. x. Sect. v. (P.) Med. p. 282.*

** *De Reb. L. iv. Sect. xxvi. (P.) Med. p. 100.*

ever, is the belief of *Jews* and *Christians*, and, according to their ideas, is not incompatible with prayer. But it is doubtful whether *Marcus Antoninus* entered into the proper principle of this, so as to make prayer perfectly compatible with his idea of fate. It does not appear that the *Stoics* in general, any more than other Heathen philosophers, had their minds exercised in prayer, habitual and occasional, in the manner of pious *Jews* and *Christians*. We should otherwise have had more of their devotional compositions, similar to those of the Psalms of *David*, and other forms of prayer that occur in the books of Scripture. The difference between the Heathens and the believers in revelation, in this respect, is so striking, as I observed before, as proves a very different state of mind with respect to a God and providence, whatever may be inferred to the contrary from occasional expressions in their writings.

That every thing that was appointed and directed by the Supreme Being is right, *Marcus Antoninus* never doubted. "If there be a God," he says, "every thing is right."* According to him, this made the existence of any thing properly *evil* absolutely impossible. "Nothing," he says, "can be hurtful that is good for the whole; and every thing in the universe must be good for it. This is common to the nature of every thing, and the world must have it in the greatest degree, because there is nothing external to itself to force any thing noxious upon it."† This consideration is with us also an argument for the unchangeable goodness, and other attributes of God, the evidence of which we see in the works of nature. We say that, since there are evident marks of *benevolence* in what we experience and see around us, a principle of *malevolence*, which is opposite to it, cannot be admitted. Every thing, therefore, must have been designed for the best, whether at present we can see it to be so or not. And as there is nothing in nature superior to this benevolent Supreme Intelligence, this system, tending in all respects to good, must be perpetual.

That this system is in a progressive state of continual improvement, was not the doctrine of the *Stoics*. It was rather their opinion that, after a certain period, every thing would return to the state in which it had been before; so that nothing would be gained by their perpetual revolutions. In this their system coincided with that of the *Hindoos*, and

* *De Reb. L.* xi. Sect. xxviii. (*P.*) *Med.* p. 219.

† *De Reb. L.* x. Sect. vi. (*P.*) *Med.* p. 238.

the oriental philosophers. This seems to be intimated by *Marcus Antoninus*. "We should bear in mind," he says, "two things; one, that all things have been from eternity in a perpetual round; the other, that there is no difference between seeing the same things a hundred years, two hundred years, or for a longer duration."* How dull and unpleasant is this prospect compared to that which is suggested in our Scriptures; according to which nothing will ever return to the state in which it has been before, but every thing will continually advance in improvement, without, however, ever reaching *perfection*, which must ever be the exclusive prerogative of the Supreme Being!

The duty of absolute submission to the Divine will, and the order of nature, as coincident with it, cannot be inculcated more forcibly than it is by the *Stoics*. "Man," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "should do nothing but what God himself would approve, and he should receive willingly whatever he assigns him. With respect to every thing that is agreeable to nature, the gods are not to be blamed, for they do nothing wrong with design."† "The principal article of piety towards the gods," says *Epictetus*, "is to have just opinions concerning them, as that they exist, and administer every thing well and rightly, and that it is our business to obey them, and acquiesce voluntarily in every thing that takes place, as being disposed for the best."‡ Treating of death, *Marcus Antoninus* says, "If every thing be ordered by Providence, I venerate the Supreme Ruler, and, depending upon him, am unmoved."§ From his opinion of the duty of submission to the Divine will, he excellently observes, "The gods either have power, or no power. If they have no power, why do you pray? If they have power, why do you not rather pray that you may be without anxiety about an event, than that the event may not take place?" This may instruct even a Christian.

It was the opinion of all the Heathens, from the earliest to the latest times, that it was right, and even necessary, to adhere to the religious rites of their ancestors; since the prosperity of the state, they thought, depended upon it. On this principle, absurd and groundless as it apparently is, it was, that the wisest and best of the Heathens acted. It

* *De Reb. L. ii. Sect. xiv. (P.) Med. p. 72.*

† *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. xi. xii. (P.) Med. pp. 284, 285.*

‡ *Enchiridion, xxxi. (P.)* See the *Works of Epictetus*, "translated from the original Greek by Elizabeth Carter," Ed. 3, 1768, II. pp. 278, 279.

§ *De Reb. L. vi. Sect. x. (P.) Med. pp. 138, 139.*

was on this principle that *Marcus Antoninus*, *Trajan*, and some others, the best disposed of the *Roman* emperors, wished to exterminate the Christians, in order that the rites of the ancient religion might not grow into disuse, to the endangering of the state. "It is every person's duty," says *Epictetus*, "to make libations, offer sacrifices and first-fruits, according to the custom of his country, not sordidly, or negligently, nor above our means."*

The good sense, however, of *Marcus Antoninus* taught him that there might be an excess and superstition in this external worship; for he commends a person, [*Antoninus Pius*] for being "religious without superstition."† He also says, "In all things pray for *the divine aid*,‡ and consider that there is no difference how long we are doing this. Three hours thus passed may suffice."§ He does not, however, say for what space of time these three hours would suffice.

Like *Socrates*, the emperor connected the practice of morality with religion; though with this, the religious rites of states, those on which their prosperity was thought to depend, had no connexion whatever. "It is of much consequence," he says, "to remember that there are gods, and that they do not wish men to deceive them, or to flatter them, but to imitate them."|| "He that fears pain, fears what must be in the world, and this is impious; and he who follows pleasure will not refrain from injustice, which is certainly impious."¶

SECTION II.

Of the Human Soul.

Hitherto we have found the principles of the *Stoics* what may be called *sublime*, and in a great degree rational, as there is but little to correct in their ideas of the Supreme Intelligence, of his universal providence, or the obligation they maintain that all men are under to conform to its will, and acquiesce in its decisions, as necessarily right and good. But we shall now find them deviating very far from truth and common sense, and leading themselves and others into

* *Enchiridion*, xxxi. (P.) *Works*, II. p. 280.

† *De Reb. L. vi. Sect. xxx.* (P.) *Med.* p. 169.

‡ "The assistance of the gods." *Med.* p. 146. § *De Reb. L. vi. Sect. xxiii.* (P.)

|| *Ibid. L. x. Sect. viii.* (P.) *Med.* pp. 237, 238.

¶ *De Reb. L. ix. Sect. i.* (P.) *Med.* p. 208.

errors of a practical nature, as we proceed to consider their ideas concerning the *mind of man*, the disposition to be cultivated in it, and the essentials of moral virtue.

The *Stoics* held the doctrine of *three principles* in man, viz. his *body*, consisting of gross matter, the principle of mere *animal life*, called by them πνευμα or ψυχη, and the proper *intellectual principle*, called νοϋς. The difference between men and other animals appeared to them to be so great, that they could not believe the latter to be possessed of the highest principle of human nature; but as men have every thing that belongs to brutes, in which they acknowledge something superior to mere *matter*, they were under a necessity of making the component parts of man to be three.

Moreover, as they considered all matter as fundamentally the same, though forming different substances, they conceived the animal principle to be the same in all, flowing from a common source, to animate particular bodies for a time, and then, like the breath to which it was generally compared, mixed with the origin from which it was derived.

In like manner, having no idea of a proper *creation*, that is, *out of nothing*, they considered the highest principle in man, viz. that of intelligence, as the same in all, derived from the same source; and this they conceived to be the Supreme Intelligence, which disposed and directs the affairs of the whole universe, and, like the principle of animal life, they held that, being detached from this source at the birth of every man, it was absorbed into it again after his death, as a drop of water (to use a comparison that is frequent with them) is absorbed and lost in the ocean. Consequently, its separate existence, and its separate consciousness, then vanished.

According to this philosophy, therefore, the souls of men are so many portions of the Divinity; and this led the professors of it to ascribe to them the properties and powers of divinity, making them sufficient for their own happiness, independently of every thing external to them; and, as the Supreme Intelligence is incapable of suffering from evil of any kind, they transferred this extraordinary power to the soul; maintaining that nothing foreign to itself could affect it without its own consent, so that it is in every man's power to be completely happy, whatever his outward circumstances may be.

This sentiment, which has an air of great sublimity, tended to inspire the *Stoics* with a sense of native dignity,

rendering them superior to every thing mean and base ; but it excluded humility, and many amiable and useful virtues, peculiarly adapted to the state of society with beings equally imperfect with themselves. Their sentiments, however, on this subject, so nearly connected with morals, led them to express themselves with respect to the common accidents of life in a manner that, with a little qualification, is truly admirable and edifying ; but, when taken literally, their language justly shocks a Christian, who feels his own weakness, and is thereby disposed to compassionate the weakness and infirmities of others ; the most amiable, and, in the present state of things, one of the most useful of all virtues.

On the subject of the different component parts of man *Marcus Antoninus* expresses himself as follows : “ Man consists of flesh, the animal principle, (*πνευματιον*), and the governing principle (*ἡγεμονικον*). The *πνευμα* is breath, or air, (*ανεμ*), nor is it always the same, but is drawn in and emitted. You consist of three parts, the body, the *πνευματιον*, and the mind (*νοος*). The two former are so far yours, as that they are committed to your care, but the third only is properly yours.”* For the intellectual part of man was considered as so much superior to the other two, as to deserve to be alone called a man’s self ; and on several occasions we shall find that the two other parts were thought to be as much foreign to a man as if they did not belong to him at all, any more than other parts of the external world.

The unity of these three elements, of which every man consists, is thus described by *Marcus Antoninus* : “ One living principle (*ψυχη*) is distributed to all irrational animals, and one intelligent living principle (*νοερα ψυχη*) to all rational ones, just as to the several elements there is one and the same earth. We all see and live with one light, and breathe one air.”† “ There is one light of the sun, though it be distributed upon different things ; one common nature, though distributed into various different bodies ; one *ψυχη*,‡ though distributed to innumerable peculiar natures ; and one intelligent principle (*νοερα ψυχη*), though it seems to be divided.”§

The idea which the *Stoics* entertained of the native dignity and superior powers of the human mind, flowed necessarily from their opinion of its origin and final destina-

* *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. iii. (P.) Med. pp. 280, 281.*

† *De Reb. L. ix. Sect. viii. (P.) Med. pp. 211, 212.*

‡ “ Animal soul.” *Ibid. p. 291.* § *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. xxx. (P.)*

tion ; but it corresponds very little with experience, and is wholly discordant with the principles of revelation. “ You forget,” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “ that the mind of every man is God, and flowed from the divinity.”* And again, “ Thou art part of the universe, and wilt vanish into that which produced thee, or rather by some intervening change, thou wilt be received into the seminal reason (λογον σπερματικον), that is, the source of all reason.”†

These ideas of the great power and natural independence of the mind were suitable to the opinion of its high origin and final destination, as having been originally part of the Supreme Universal Intelligence, and destined to be absorbed into it, and to become part of it again. “ It belongs,” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “ to the mind to be free from error and defect.”‡ “ Neither fire, nor external violence, nor calumny, nor any thing else can reach the mind, when, like a sphere, it is compact within itself.”§ “ The soul endued with reason has the following powers : it sees itself, it forms and limits itself, it makes itself whatever it pleases. Whatever fruit it produces, it reaps itself ; whereas other persons gather the fruits of trees, and also whatever is produced from animals. It always gains its purpose, at whatever time its life terminates ; so that it is not, as in a dance, or a play, in which the action is sometimes interrupted by incidents, and is therefore imperfect. But wherever it is taken, what precedes is complete and perfect ; so that I may say, I have every thing that belongs to me within me. Add to this, the mind traverses the whole world, and what surrounds it. It contemplates its form, and looking forward into eternity, it considers the renovation of the universe at certain intervals.”||

An essential prerogative of the mind of man, and of the most use in the conduct of life, the *Stoics* considered to be its *command of thought*, and by this means its total independence on every thing foreign to itself ; since it is under no necessity of giving any attention to them. “ How can

* *De Reb.* L. xii. Sect. xxvi. (P.) *Med.* p. 289.

† *De Reb.* L. iv. Sect. xiv. (P.) *Med.* p. 95.

‡ *De Reb.* L. vii. Sect. lv. (P.) *Med.* pp. 175, 176.

§ *De Reb.* L. viii. Sect. xli. (P.) *Med.* p. 198.

“ Teres atque rotundus

Externi ne quid valeat per leve morari.”

Hor. L. ii. *Sat.* vii. *Ibid.*

“ Polished and round who runs his proper course,
And breaks misfortune with superior force.”

Francis. See his *Note.*

|| *De Reb.* L. xi. Sect. i. (P.) *Med.* pp. 257, 258.

opinions," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "be abolished, unless thoughts suitable to them be extinguished, which you may for that purpose call up whenever you please? I can think of any thing that I have occasion for; and if I can, why should my mind be disturbed?"*

Thus these philosophers flattered themselves with the idea of their happiness being wholly independent on any thing foreign to the mind, and that it became them to maintain a perfect indifference towards every thing that is the object of affection or respect to other men. "If you behave," says *Epictetus*, "with becoming indifference towards children, wife, the magistrate, riches, you will be worthy of being a guest of the gods; but if you can despise all these things that are foreign to yourself, you will not only be a companion with them, but a god yourself. Thus *Diogenes*, *Heraclitus*,† and others like them, deserve to be called, and really were, *divine*."‡ It is surely hardly possible to carry extravagance and absurdity farther than this; so far, however, we see that a false philosophy, pursued to its natural consequences, can carry men from every thing that we are taught by daily experience and observation of common life; and yet these were men of deep thought and reflection, and both *Epictetus* and *Marcus Antoninus* lived in the world, and had to do with men and their affairs.

SECTION III.

Of Virtue and Vice.

The great use of religion, and of moral philosophy, is to furnish the mind with proper rules of life, by the observance of which we shall best secure our own happiness, and be the most disposed to promote that of others; to enable us to bear the evils of life with the least pain, and the prospect of death without terror. On all these three heads, therefore, I shall examine the merit of the Stoical philosophy, and compare it with the Christian.

The dignified sentiments maintained by the *Stoics* concerning the human soul lead us to expect great elevation of mind with respect to virtue; and in this we shall not be disappointed, as far as virtue in their ideas of it extended;

* *De Reb. L. vii. Sect. i. (P.) Med. p. 160.*

† "For *Heraclitus*, I suspect, should be read *Hercules*." *Mrs. Carter's Note in Works, II. p. 270.*

‡ *Enchir. xv. (P.)*

and it comprehended every thing that relates to the due government of the passions, all the relative duties, and those that affect the intercourse between man and man. They also made happiness to depend entirely on the practice of virtue, independent on any foreign consideration, such as the fear of punishment, the hope of reward, or the opinion of others, expressed in praise or censure.

Marcus Antoninus, having observed that it is in the power of man to be happy in any situation, and especially in one that suits him, says, "If you ask what this proper situation is, I answer that it consists in good morals, a good disposition, and good actions."* "It is a pleasure to a man to do what suits his nature, and it suits the nature of man to be kind to his countrymen, to command the emotions of his senses, to distinguish what is probable in what is before him, to contemplate the nature of the universe, and the things that are agreeable to it."† "Do nothing," he says, "for the sake of admiration, but be the same when alone as if you were before others."‡ For he justly observes, "We fear more what others think of us, than what we think of ourselves."§ Agreeably to this, *Epictetus* says, "If your thoughts be employed in external things, and you wish to please any person, you err from the path of life; whereas in all cases remember that you are a philosopher, and that you appear so to yourself, though not to others."||

The *Stoics* carried the principle of disinterestedness to the highest pitch, beyond the bounds of reason or nature, expecting no reward for their virtues either in this life or any other, except the satisfaction of their own minds; and this was short of any proper pleasurable sensation; for, according to their general system, nothing of this kind ought to be indulged. "When you confer a favour," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "is not this sufficient, without any reward? Does the eye require a reward for seeing, or the feet for walking? So man, who is made to do good, should be satisfied with the good that he does."¶

The extremely rigid maxims, so much above the comprehension of the vulgar, led them to consider the practice of virtue as the peculiar privilege of philosophers, and real happiness as much more so; for who, besides philosophers,

* *De Reb. L. v. Sect. xxxvi. (P.) Med. p. 136.*

† *De Reb. L. viii. Sect. xxvi. (P.) Med. p. 193.*

‡ *De Reb. L. xi. Sect. xviii. (P.) Med. pp. 271, 272.*

§ *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. iv. (P.) Med. p. 282.*

|| *Enchir. xxiii. (P.) Works, p. 273.*

¶ *De Reb. L. ix. Sect. xlii. (P.) Med. pp. 228, 229.*

could be expected to despise every thing that was foreign to themselves, and to consider every thing on which the comfort of life depends as included in this class ; and without this there is, according to them, neither real virtue nor true happiness, as will be more evident in the farther development of their principles.

Some philosophers were poor, as *Epictetus* himself, who was even some time in servitude ; and in an age in which books were scarce and dear, and learning not easily attained, some of them might not be able to read. In this case, *Marcus Antoninus* says, “ If you cannot read, you can abstain from abuse, even of the ungrateful, and also be kind to them. You need not be heard to complain of your situation, or envy that of others.”* Happily, however, these virtues, and every other, may be attained without philosophy.

Unhappily, the *Stoics* considered every thing that is foreign to the calm dictates of reason, all emotions and passions, as belonging to mere animal nature ; seeing that men have them in common with brutes. They, therefore, thought it a point of magnanimity and duty in man to suppress every thing of this kind with respect to others as well as themselves. “ Do not,” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “ join others in their lamentations, or be moved by them.”† *Epictetus*, however, makes some little allowance for the weakness of human nature, when he says, “ If you see a friend in distress, accommodate yourself to him so far as to lament and groan along with him, but take care that you groan not inwardly.”‡

These maxims, I need not say, are as remote from the dictates of nature, as they are from the precepts of Scripture, which bids us [*Rom. xii. 10*] to be “ kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love,” and from this principle, [*ver. 15,*] to “ rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.” How can men be supposed to act but as prompted by their *feelings* ?

Though *Marcus Antoninus* advises to do good to a man's fellow-citizens, and even to the ungrateful, it was not, according to his principles, to be dictated by any *affection*, as that of *love*, but only because it was the part of man, and became him to act in this manner, as it was for the eye to see, or the feet to walk. But Christianity knows nothing of the distinction of the different component parts of man,

* *De Reb. L. viii. Sect. viii. (P.) Med. p. 187.*

† *De Reb. L. vii. Sect. xliii. (P.) Med. p. 171.*

‡ *Enchir. xvi. (P.) Works, II. p. 270.*

and the natural superiority of one of them to the rest. *Paul*, though he expresses [1 *Thess.* v. 23] a wish that his brethren might be *sanctified* in “spirit and soul and body,” said it only in allusion to the three-fold division of man above-mentioned, which was familiar to the *Greeks*, to whom he was writing, desiring that, whatever they considered as belonging to man, or part of him, it might be sanctified, as a suitable temple for the spirit of God. He was not declaring his own principles, as a *Jew* or a *Christian*.

The opinion which the *Stoics* maintained of the superior excellence of the intellectual principle in all men was such, that they considered every emotion or passion that led to vice as foreign to it, as arising only from the principle that is common to men and brutes; and, therefore, not from any thing that was properly a man’s self. In consequence of this, they professed to have no indignation against the vices of men, but considered them like evils and inconveniences of any other kind, at which it does not become any man to be disturbed, being agreeable to the order of nature.

Accordingly, *Marcus Antoninus* having observed that we have no reason to complain of the gods, with respect to any thing that befalls us, adds, “Neither are men to be complained of; for neither do they offend willingly.”* “It is the part of man to love those who offend them; and this he will do, if he recollect that all men are related, and that when they offend, it is when they do not know it, or do it against their wills.”† “When I consider that the person who injures me is a partaker of the same intellect and portion of the divinity, that I cannot be injured by him, that he has no power to draw me into any thing dishonest, I cannot be angry with him, or hate him.”‡

The *Stoics* were led into these sentiments and this conduct, by considering every man as wholly independent on every other, each being separately sufficient for his own happiness, and incapable of interfering with that of any other. “Does any person offend me?” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “let him look to it. He has his own dispositions and actions, and I have what nature wills me to have, and I do what is agreeable to nature.”§ Again he says, “Does any person injure me? No; he injures himself.”|| “If you suffer through fraudulent, faithless, injurious persons,

* *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. xii. (P.) Med. p. 285.*

† *De Reb. L. vii. Sect. xxii. (P.) Med. p. 166.*

‡ *De Reb. L. ii. Sect. i. (P.) Med. pp. 62, 63.*

§ *De Reb. L. v. Sect. xxv. (P.) Med. p. 21.*

|| *De Reb. L. iv. Sect. xxvi. (P.) Med. p. 99.*

consider that there must be such men in the world, and you will bear with them.”* “When you take any thing ill, you forget that every thing takes place according to the nature of the universe.”† “If we consider these things only as evils which depend upon our own wills, we shall see no reason for blaming, or bearing ill-will to any man.”

Besides this great indifference to the vices of other persons, as injuring only themselves, that of fornication was never considered by any Heathens, philosophers or others, as one, any farther than it was found to be injurious. This is evident from the advice that *Epictetus* gives: “Abstain as much as you can from venery before marriage. If not, do it as the laws permit;‡ but do not find fault with others who are not continent, or boast that you are so.”§

How short is this of the purity required of Christians, who are taught to consider fornicators, as well as adulterers, thieves, &c. excluded from the kingdom of heaven! And how little attention must these philosophers have given to the natural consequence of venereal indulgence without the bounds of marriage; how ill it qualifies men to be affectionate husbands and fathers, and that in many cases it must indispose men to marriage in general. There was also this inconsistency in their maxims in this respect, that fornication was always reckoned infamous in the female sex; so that women of character never associated with known prostitutes. The Christian catalogue of both virtues and vices is far more copious than that of the Heathens, which was defective with respect to duties of every kind, those that are commonly said men owe to themselves and to society, as well as those that we owe to God, notwithstanding that of submission to his will, which is one of the great excellencies of the maxims of the *Stoics*, as this was founded chiefly on its being merely taken for granted, without considering any particular evidence of it, that every thing in the universe, and the government of it, must be right; for the wisdom of Providence, in the permission or appointment of evil, is never mentioned by *Marcus Antoninus*. That such things as evils of every kind *must be*, is the amount of all that he says on the subject, and that they do not affect any person who considers these as foreign to himself. He says nothing of the beneficial

* *De Reb. L. ix. Sect. xlii. (P.) Med. p. 227.*

† *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. xxvi. (P.) Med. p. 289.*

‡ “Public prostitutes were allowed by the laws at *Rome* and in *Greece*. The mischiefs occasioned by persons of this character, scarcely so much as hinted by the *Stoic* philosopher, are the subject of many beautiful reflections in the book of *Proverbs*.” *Mrs. Carter’s Note in Works*, II. p. 282.

§ *Euchir. xxxiii. (P.)*

tendency of the things that we call evil, and complain of in the system, obvious as this tendency is now seen to be. *Marcus Antoninus* would bear tribulation, but the apostle Paul rejoices in it.

The maxims of the Heathens were still more defective with respect to sufficient *motives* to the practice of virtue, in the fear of future punishment, and the prospect of future reward ; and all other motives will have but little hold on the bulk of mankind, especially if they be already engaged in bad habits. On such persons, a disinterested respect to virtue, so much insisted upon by *Marcus Antoninus*, cannot be expected to have any influence.

SECTION IV.

Of the various Evils of Life.

ANOTHER great use of religion and philosophy is to enable men to bear the various evils incident to them in life, with as little inconvenience as possible ; and accordingly, this was a principal object of the philosophy of the *Stoics*, far more than it was with any of the other sects. In this respect, their pretensions went very high indeed ; far, as we shall see, beyond the bounds of reason and nature ; so that daily experience, one would have thought, must have convinced them of their mistake. Notwithstanding this, they resolutely maintained their favourite, and indeed, fundamental, maxims of indifference to every thing foreign to themselves, (meaning the intellectual principle in them only,) which enjoined patience under, and even insensibility to all that mankind in general complain of, and call *evils*.

On this principle, they held that, without its own consent, the mind could not be affected by any thing. "I learned," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "of Apollonius to regard nothing besides mere reason, to be the same in the most acute pain, in the loss of children, and in diseases of long continuance."* So also *Epictetus* says, "If the things that disturb you be not in your power, have it ready to say, This is nothing to me. And if you consider that only as yours which is yours, and what is foreign to you as foreign to you, no person will constrain or hinder you. You will complain of no man ; you will do nothing against your will ;

* *De Reb. L. i. Sect. v. (P.) Med. p. 49.*

you will have no enemy, nor suffer any thing disagreeable to you.”*

This opinion of the nature and powers of the mind, and of things that were or were not foreign to themselves, an opinion on which so much depended, they conceived to be easily formed by those who had been taught to philosophize, so as to be readily applied on all occasions. It was only the office of *thought*, than which nothing is more easy to the *mind*, the property of which is to think. In this respect, they made no difference between the most painful sensations and impressions, corporeal or mental, though in these we find that the mind is absolutely passive; they supposing all sensations and emotions were to be referred to the merely animal part of man, on which they maintained that the mind was wholly independent; so that whatever impression might be made from without, it was in its power to relieve itself.

Consequently, they held that pleasure and pain of every kind are not to be classed among things that are either good or evil. *Marcus Antoninus* says, “Life and death, honour and ignominy, pain and pleasure, wealth and poverty, may be equally considered as good or evil,† since they are neither honourable nor dishonourable, and are, therefore, neither good nor evil.”‡ But the difficulty consists in being fully convinced of this, and regarding that as indifferent in contradiction to the actual feelings of themselves, as well as of the rest of mankind. Of this, however, they made very light.

“Reject opinion,” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “and you are safe; and what hinders your doing this, when any thing happens that is disagreeable to you? You forget that this happens according to the nature of the universe.”§ “Take away opinion,” he says, “and complaint is removed. Whatever does not make a man worse, or his conduct worse, cannot injure him internally or externally.”|| And again, “If

* *Enchir.* i. (P.) *Works*, II. pp. 261—263.

† “Happen promiscuously to the good and bad.” *Med.* p. 69.

‡ *De Reb.* L. ii. Sect. ii. There is a passage in the *Table of Cebes*, who was a disciple of *Socrates*, in which this sentiment of life and death, health and sickness, being to be classed among things indifferent to happiness, occurs. But it must have been added by some person who, if not a *Stoic*, must have lived long after the time of this *Cebes*. “Life,” he says, “is not to be classed among the *goods* or the *evils*, because it is enjoyed alike by those who live well, and those who live ill. The same may be said of cutting and burning; for these operations are usefully employed by those who are sick and those who are well. Neither is death an absolute evil, because it is sometimes preferred to life by the brave; nor health or sickness, riches, or any other seeming advantage, because they are often of no real use.” (P.)

§ *De Reb.* L. xii. Sect. xxv. xxvi. (P.) *Med.* p. 289.

|| *De Reb.* L. iv. Sect. vii. viii. (P.) *Med.* p. 93.

I do not consider any thing that befalls me as an evil, I am not injured, and it depends upon myself whether I think so or not.”* “How easy,” says he, “to remove every imagination that is troublesome or inconvenient, so as to preserve the mind in perfect tranquillity!”† “In pain, the soul may preserve its tranquillity, and not think it to be an evil. Every thing of the nature of opinion, inclination, and appetite, is within us, where nothing that is evil can come. Remove imagination,” he says, addressing himself, “and it is in my power that no vice, no irregular desire, no perturbation exist in my mind; but, regarding every thing as it really is, to make use of it according to its value. Remember that this power is given to you by nature.”‡ So *Epictetus* says, “No person can hurt you, unless you will. Then only are you injured when you think you are so.”§

In a more particular manner they made light of every thing that affected the *body* only; for which, as consisting of brute matter, they professed the greatest contempt, as if it had borne no relation whatever to the mind, which they considered as the only proper seat of good or evil, true pleasure or pain. “Nothing,” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “that is an evil to you depends upon any change that takes place in that in which you are enclosed. If the body be cut, burned, or putrify, only let that part of a man which forms its opinion concerning it be at rest, that is, not consider that as good or evil which may happen either to good or bad men; for whatever happens alike to him that lives agreeably to nature, or contrary to it, is a matter of indifference.”|| “You may pass your life without injury and with the greatest cheerfulness, though wild beasts tear the limbs of the body that surrounds you and adheres to you.”¶

The language in which they sometimes express this indifference to the body is amusing, and might have been said by way of ridicule of their system. “Pain,” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “is an evil to the body. If it is so, let the body look to it.”** “As to the limbs of the body, if they be in pain, let them take care of it, if they can do any thing.”†† Again, “Let the flesh with which you are surrounded mind

* *De Reb. L. vii. Sect. xiv. (P.) Med. p. 164.*

† *De Reb. L. v. Sect. ii. (P.) Med. p. 113.*

‡ *De Reb. L. viii. Sect. xxviii. xxix. (P.) Med. pp. 193, 194.*

§ *Enchir. xxx. (P.) Works, II. p. 278.*

|| *De Reb. C. iv. Sect. xxxix. (P.) Med. p. 105.*

¶ *De Reb. L. vii. Sect. lxviii. (P.) Med. p. 181.*

** *De Reb. L. viii. Sect. xxviii. (P.) Med. p. 193.*

†† *De Reb. L. vii. Sect. xxxiii. (P.) Med. p. 169.*

its own sufferings.”* “If a raven,” says *Epictetus*, “forebode any ill,† immediately reply, it may be to your body, your reputation, your children, or your wife. *Every thing fortunate is intended for me*, if I please;‡ for whatever happens to me is in my power, and I may derive advantage from it.”§

However, besides this great sheet-anchor, as it may be called, of the *Stoics*, by which they procured their tranquillity in all the storms of life, viz. their idea of the absolute independence of the mind upon every thing external to it, and its sufficiency for its own happiness, they occasionally mention other considerations not peculiar to themselves, some of more, and some of less, weight. Among others, *Marcus Antoninus* says, “If pain cannot be borne, it will cease, and if it be of long continuance, it may be borne;|| and in the mean time the mind, by means of its opinion, may preserve its tranquillity.”¶

Another of his resources is not so reasonable: “Think with yourself,” he says, “that nothing past or future, but only that which is present can be the cause of uneasiness to you.”** This is by no means true with respect to beings capable of reflection, whose happiness or misery necessarily depends much more on the past and the future than on the present moment. It is only a brute or a child to which this observation is applicable, nor even to them completely, or long.

One rule of *Epictetus*, however, is truly valuable, if it could be applied. But the *Stoics* always imagined that much more was in their power than really was so. “Do not seek to find things as you wish them to be, but wish for that which actually is, and you will pass your life in tranquillity.”†† The great difficulty in this, (but to this the *Stoics* gave no attention,) is in the application of such a rule; and other principles, out of the sphere of their philosophy, but comprehended in those of Christianity, are necessary to assist us in this.

This great excellence of character, which raised some men so much above the level of their species, and which rendered them superior to all the evils of life, and also to

* *De Reb. L. xii. Sect. i. (P.) Med. p. 279.*

† “Happens to croak unluckily.” *Works, II. p. 271.*

‡ “To me all portents are lucky.” *Ibid.* § *Enchir. xviii. (P.)*

|| “What is intolerable, must soon carry us off. What is lasting, is tolerable.” *Med. p. 169.*

¶ *De Reb. L. vii. Sect. xxxiii. (P.)*

** *Ibid. L. viii. Sect. xxxvi. (P.) Med. pp. 196, 197.*

†† *Enchir. viii. (P.) Works, II. pp. 266.*

the fear of death, the *Stoics* ascribed wholly to philosophy ; so that it required much study and reflection to attain it, though afterwards the exercise of it was easy. “ The time of human life,” says *Marcus Antoninus*, “ is a point ; nature is in a continual flux, the senses are obscure, the body liable to corruption, &c. &c.* ; the only thing” (that is of value) “ is philosophy, which consists in preserving *the mind*† entire, superior to pleasure or pain, self-sufficient, having nothing to do with what others do or do not do, and receiving the things that befall them as coming from the same source with themselves.”‡ “ It is a mark,” says *Epictetus*, “ of the common people to look for loss or gain from what is external to them, but the philosopher expects nothing but from himself. The proof that he is a philosopher, is, that he censures no person, commends no person, complains of no man, never boasts of himself, as a person of any consequence. If he meets with obstacles from his acquaintance he blames only himself. If any person praise him he laughs at him, and if he be censured he does not excuse himself,” &c.§

If only such persons as these be *philosophers*, they will never be very numerous. Indeed, we must not look for them among *men*, not even those who make the greatest profession and boast of this very philosophy ; because it could not be in their power to divest themselves of the common principles of human nature. We see, however, in these extremely absurd maxims, how far metaphysical or general principles can carry men, at least in speculation ; and therefore of what importance it is to form just ones, agreeable to the real principles of human nature ; for such only can lead to the proper duty and happiness of man.

That the *Stoics*, however, found more difficulty than they were willing in general to allow, in reducing their maxims to practice, appears from their frequently inculcating the necessity of having proper rules or remedies at hand, for every case that might occur. “ As surgeons,”|| says *Marcus*

* “ The soul is restless, fortune uncertain, and fame injudicious. To sum up all, the body, and all things related to it, are like a river ; what belongs to the animal life, is a dream, and smoky ; life a warfare, and a journey in a strange land ; surviving fame is but oblivion. What is it, then, which can conduct us honourably out of life, and accompany us in our future progress ? Philosophy alone.” *Med.* p. 73.

† “ The divinity within us. *Ibid.*

‡ *De Reb. L. ii. Sect. xvii. (P.) Med.* pp. 73, 74.

§ *Enchir.* xlviii. (P.) *Works*, II. pp. 291, 292.

|| Rather “ physicians.” *Med.* p. 86. “ The same person was physician, surgeon, and apothecary among the ancient Greeks and Romans.” *Ibid.* See *Middleton*, “ *De medicorum apud veteres Romanos Dissertatio*,” *Works*, 1752, IV. pp. 200, 201.

Antoninus, "have their instruments ready for every operation, so have you your maxims ready, by the help of which you may distinguish divine and human things,"* meaning probably things within our power, and those that were out of it. "There is no retirement so complete as that into one's own mind, especially if it be well stored with maxims, by the consideration of which it may attain perfect tranquillity; and by this means it is in a man's power to remove every cause of uneasiness."† "Whatever occurs to you," says *Epictetus*, "have some principle ready to oppose to it. If you see a beautiful boy or girl, have recourse to continence; if labour, the enduring of it; if reproach, patience. By this means appearances will not mislead you."‡ "In pain let this consideration be at hand," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "that it is not disgraceful, or makes the governing power" (the mind) "at all the worse, and that nothing that is either material, or that relates to other persons, can injure it."§

How greatly superior, and how much better adapted to the real principles of human nature, and the common feelings of men, are the consolations of our religion, to those of this philosophy! In the Scriptures the idea of the Divine Being is that of the Universal Parent, our Father in heaven, who never afflicts his children but for their benefit. "He doth not," we read, [*Lam.* iii. 33,] "afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men." Yea, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth *their* frame: he remembereth that *they* are dust." [*Psalms* ciii. 13, 14.] With respect to the wicked, he is represented as forbearing to punish with severity, waiting for their repentance and reformation, which is the sole object of the discipline to which they are exposed; being "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." [2 *Peter* iii. 9.]

These sentiments are such as all men may feel the force of, and are therefore adapted to common use. Christianity also holds out a sufficient reward for all our sufferings, when they are borne with a proper temper; and of this the *Stoics* taught nothing. *Affliction*, as the apostle says, [*Heb.* xii. 11; 2 *Cor.* iv. 17, 18,] is not "joyous but grievous; nevertheless" it "worketh for us a far more exceeding, *even an* eternal weight of glory; while *it makes us to look* not at

* *De Reb.* L. iii. Sect. xiii. (P.) † *Ibid.* L. iv. Sect. iii. (P.) *Med.* p. 90.

‡ *Enchir.* x. (P.) *Works*, II. p. 267.

§ *De Reb.* L. vii. Sect. lxiv. (P.) *Med.* p. 179.

the things which are seen, which are *temporary*, but at the things which are *unseen*, which are eternal.*

It is not among the *Stoics*, or any Heathens, that we must look for such truly consoling sentiments as these. With these helps, Christians are enabled to endure affliction not only with patience, which was all that the *Stoics* pretended to, but with joy; and accordingly the apostles exhort their fellow-christians *to rejoice in tribulation; in every thing to give thanks*. “Count it all joy,” says the apostle *James*, (*Ch. i. 2—4*,) when ye fall into divers *trials*; knowing that the *trial* of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” *Ver. 12*: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.”

SECTION V.

Of Death.

Of all the evils of life, *death* is the natural termination; but it is likewise the same with respect to all the enjoyments of it, and what is more, of all our future *hopes*, if we have nothing to look to beyond it. On this account it has always been classed in the catalogue of the *evils* to which men are subject, and one from which no man, whatever may be his rank or situation in life, can be exempt.

The apprehension of this universal catastrophe would oppress the mind much more than it generally does, if the *time*, and other *circumstances* attending it, were known to us. But these being unknown and uncertain, and all men having their thoughts engaged in the pursuit of their several objects, and also naturally disposed to flatter themselves, they seldom think of death till the very near approach of it; and then they are often wholly insensible of it; so that their suffering from it at the time is generally inconsiderable.

Still, however, the consideration of death must often throw a cloud over the brightest prospects of many men who reflect on their situation, and especially those whose lot in life is the most pleasing to them; and, in general, tend to abate the sanguine views and expectations with which persons generally enter upon life. On these accounts a remedy for the fear of death has always been considered as a most desirable

* See Vol. XVI. pp. 469, 470.

thing, and an important article in religion and philosophy. It was so more particularly with the *Stoics*, as is evident from their frequent mention of it, and the various arguments they urge to reconcile the minds of men to it. Some of them are valuable, and, as far as they go, satisfactory ; especially that to which they have constant recourse, as flowing directly from the fundamental principle of their system, viz. the submission that we owe to the established order of nature and providence, which we cannot alter, and which we must take for granted is right.

“ To die,” say *Marcus Antoninus*, “ is not grievous, since there are gods who will not involve thee in any thing that is evil. If there were no gods, or if they gave no attention to the affairs of men, it would not be worth while to live in such a world. But there are gods, and they do take care of human affairs, and they have put it into every man’s power not to fall into any evil.”* “ We should meet death,” he says, “ with a benevolent and placid mind, as a dissolution of those elements of which every animal consists ; and if nothing extraordinary happens to these elements, which are continually changing into one another, it is no subject of dread, because it is according to nature, and nothing is an evil that is agreeable to nature.”†

One use of the expectation of death is well pointed out by *Epictetus*. “ Let death,” says he, “ exile, and every thing that is troublesome, be always present to your thoughts, and especially death, and you will have no mean thoughts, nor desire any thing inordinately.”‡

Some of the *Stoical* arguments against the fear of death are not equally satisfactory with that above-mentioned, especially that which *Marcus Antoninus* alleges with respect to evils in general, though he applies it more particularly to the consideration of death, viz. that nothing really interests us besides what is actually present. “ In death,” he says, “ we only lose the present, which is the same to all persons ; for what is past or future cannot be the subject of life. This makes the longest life equal to the shortest.” On this idea he enlarges in a manner that is truly extraordinary, in a man of general good sense, and disposed to reflection. “ Though you should live,” he says, “ three thousand years, or more than ten times as long, you should remember that no person can have more of this life, or of any other life, than he really has. It is the same thing,

* *De Reb. L. ii. Sect. xi. (P.) Med. pp. 68, 69*

† *De Reb. L. ii. Sect. xvii. (P.) Med. p. 74. See Vol. XVI, p. 470.*

‡ *Enchir. xxi. (P.) Works, II. p. 272.*

therefore, whether you have the longest or the shortest life, since the present is the same to all; so that what is lost is only momentary.”*

“If any of the gods,” he says, “should tell you that you must die either this day or the next, you would think it a matter of indifference which to choose, unless you were the most abject of men. In like manner, neither would you think it of consequence whether you lived a thousand years or died to-morrow.”† “He who thinks that whatever is seasonable is good, will think there is no difference whether he perform more or fewer actions agreeable to reason, and whether he contemplate the universe a longer or a shorter space of time. To him death cannot be formidable.”‡

In this sentiment, however, the emperor would not have the concurrence of mankind in general. They consider life as valuable, and would, therefore, prefer a longer to a shorter one; and no doubt he himself, notwithstanding this reasoning, would have done so too, provided (as we may presume in his case) his prospects, in the continuance of life and of power, had been promising.

What makes the apprehension of death distressing to some persons of a melancholy turn of mind, is their connecting with it things that do not properly belong to it; being things that at the time they cannot have any knowledge or feeling of; as the circumstances attending a funeral, being enclosed in a coffin, being put under ground, and there putrifying, and perhaps devoured by worms, &c. &c. On this subject the emperor very properly says, “If we separate from death every thing that does not necessarily belong to it, and which usually makes it an object of terror, there is nothing in it but the work of nature; and whoever dreads any thing in nature is a child. But death is not only the work of nature, but a thing that is of use in the system of nature, and it is in a man’s power to consider the relation that the principal part of him bears to God, and what is to be the condition of that part when it shall be released from the body.”§

In this he alludes to the philosophical principle of the absorption of all inferior intelligences into the great Universal Intelligence.|| But neither he, nor any other Heathen

* *De Reb. L. ii. Sect. xvi. (P.) Med. p. 71.*

† *De Reb. L. iv. Sect. xlvii. (P.) Med. p. 108. See Vol. XVI. p. 470.*

‡ *De Reb. L. xxii. Sect. xxxv. (P.) Med. p. 294.*

§ *De Reb. L. ii. Sect. xii. (P.) Med. p. 70.*

|| “When it returns to God again.” *Ibid.*

philosopher, had, or could have, an unshaken belief in that doctrine, little consolation as it can afford; for what is a drop of water, (which is their usual comparison,) when absorbed in the ocean?

Besides, the *Stoics*, as well as all the other philosophers, often express doubts on the subject; like *Socrates*, putting the supposition, that death is either an entire dispersion of all the elements of which man consists, which puts a period to all consciousness, or that absorption of the soul into the Soul of the Universe which puts an end to all separate individual consciousness, and which cannot be very different from it. "If," says *Marcus Antoninus*, "every thing is to be dissipated, why should I think of any thing but being, some way or other, reduced to earth; and why should I be disturbed at this? Do what I will, this dispersion will come some time or other."* "If, after death, you be deprived of all sense, you will likewise lose all sense of pleasure and pain. You will then cease to be a slave to the worst part of yourself. But is not that which was enslaved the better part of you, when the one is intellectual and a genius, and the other mud and corruption?"† Wait your death with tranquillity, whether it be an extinction of being or a removal. Till that time come, be content to worship the gods, to do good to men, to bear with them, remembering that every thing foreign to yourself is neither yours, nor in your power.‡

This supposition of the two possible consequences of death, so frequent with the Heathen philosophers, and with the *Stoics* as much as any other, certainly shews an unsteadiness of opinion on the subject, and that little consolation was in fact derived from it. No such uncertainty is expressed by Jesus, the apostles, or any Christian. With them the belief of a resurrection was as unshaken as that of death, and it operated accordingly, relieving them from all anxiety on the subject, and enabling them ever to rejoice in the prospect of exchanging this life for a better.

On the subject of *self-murder*, the *Stoics* seem to have had no settled opinion, sometimes maintaining, as the emperor seems to do, that it is the duty of every man to remain in the station in which Providence has placed him, till he receives an order from the same power to quit it, by which must be meant something foreign to a man's own will, or

* *De Reb. L. vi. Sect. x. (P.) Med. pp. 138, 139.*

† *De Reb. L. iii. Sect. iii. (P.) Med. pp. 77, 78.*

‡ *De Reb. L. v. Sect. xxxiii. (P.) Med. p. 134.*

inclination, as by disease or violence. But if we judge by the practice of some of the most distinguished of the sect, as that of *Zeno* himself, *Plato* and others, they considered it as an act of great heroism, especially becoming a man who must otherwise live in ignominy; notwithstanding their maintaining at other times, that neither praise nor blame, servitude or exile, being things foreign to a man's self, ought to give him any uneasiness.

Marcus Antoninus himself expresses, though somewhat obscurely, his approbation of self-murder. "If you must die, let it be as those who have suffered nothing. If the smoke be troublesome, I leave it. Why should this appear of consequence to any person? But nothing compels me to depart. I remove freely, since no person can hinder me from doing what I please. It is my wish to do what belongs to a man endued with reason, and born for society."* This allusion to his quitting a smoky house, looks like a voluntary act; the compulsion being very inconsiderable, since a smoky house is tolerable though not pleasant.

The amount of all these philosophical remedies against the fear of death, is nothing more than a patient acquiescence in what is unavoidable, and what must be taken for granted is right, with respect to the whole system of which we are a part; death, as well as birth, being included in it. The same argument applies to the deprivation of any thing that men value, as health, riches, pleasure, power, &c. &c. but what can prevent our regret at the loss of them, if we really value them? And is not life a thing that all men value, and consequently must they not naturally part with it, as well as other things, with regret, when they can retain it no longer, and have no prospect of any equivalent for the loss, which must have been the case with the Heathen world? This is certainly the language of nature; and if philosophers say any thing to the contrary, as the *Stoics* do, it is a proof that their principles are not agreeable to nature, and therefore false, and their topics of consolation under affliction, and in the prospect of death, are not adapted to the nature and condition of man.

How unspeakably more natural, and therefore more efficacious and valuable, is the consolation that Christianity holds out to a dying man, who is conscious that he has lived a virtuous life! It is not the gloomy consolation of the dispersion of the elements of which his body consists, and

* *De Reb. L. v. Sect. xxix. (P.) Med. pp. 131, 132.*

never to be collected again, or the re-union of his soul to that of the whole universe, from which he cannot conceive any source of joy to himself individually, and of which, indeed, he cannot form any distinct idea ; but the exchange of this life for a better, a state in which he will not be subject to sickness or pain, and in which he will not die any more, but continue in existence without end ; and this not mere existence, but a life of the truest enjoyment, the enjoyment of things which the apostle says, [1 *Cor.* ii. 9,] “ eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,” and such as it has not “ entered into the *mind* of man” to conceive. With this prospect, certain and glorious, though not distinct and particular, well may the Christian say in dying, [xv. 55,] “ O death, where is thy sting ? O grave, where is thy victory ?” That Christians of every denomination actually believe this, and that this is the most essential and unquestionable article of their faith, cannot be denied ; and this firm faith accounts, in the most satisfactory manner, not only for the calm resignation, which is all that the Stoics pretended to, but the joy with which thousands of Christians have met death, and even endured the greatest tortures that could be inflicted upon them, rather than renounce their faith.

Had *Marcus Antoninus* been acquainted with the sentiments of Christians on this subject, he could not have called their refusal to live on the terms that he proposed to them *obstinacy*,* because it had a natural and real foundation, the

* “ How happy,” says he, “ is that soul, which is prepared, either to depart presently from the body, or to be extinguished, or dispersed, or to remain along with it ! But, let this preparation arise from its own judgment, and not from mere obstinacy, like that of the Christians.” *Med.* (B. xi. 3,) p. 259. “ The Emperor,” says *Jortin*, “ was prejudiced against the Christians, and has censured very unreasonably what he ought to have approved, their readiness and resolution to die for their religion.” *Discourses on the Christian Religion*, Ed. 2, 1747, p. 52, Note †. See *Lardner*, VII. pp. 400, 401.

Epictetus, in the Discourse *Of Fearlessness*, (B. iv. Ch. vii.,) speaking of those to whom the guards of a tyrant and their swords are no longer formidable, says “ Is it possible, that any one should be thus disposed towards these things from madness ; and the *Galileans* from mere habit ?” *Works of Epictetus*, II. p. 213. Mrs. Carter remarks, in a Note on this passage,

“ *Epictetus*, probably, means, not any remaining disciples of *Judas of Galilee*, but the Christians, whom *Julian* afterwards affected to call *Galileans*. It helps to confirm this opinion, that *M. Antoninus* mentions them, by their proper name of *Christians*, as suffering death out of mere obstinacy. It would have been more reasonable, and more worthy the character of these great men, to have inquired into the principles, on which the Christians refused to worship Heathen deities, and by which they were enabled to support their sufferings with such amazing constancy, than rashly to pronounce their behaviour the effect of obstinacy and habit. *Epictetus* and *Antoninus* were too exact judges of human nature, not to know, that ignominy, tortures, and death, are not, merely on their own account, objects of choice ; nor could the records of any time or nation furnish them with an example of multitudes of persons of both sexes, of all ages, ranks, and natural

bearing of an evil of short continuance, however severe, for a degree of happiness that would be an abundant recompence for it.

The *Stoics*, indeed, held out, as we have seen, a kind of immortality to man, in those great revolutions, to which they supposed that, at certain periods, every thing in nature would be subject; so that as every thing had once been in the very state in which it now is, it would some time hence revert to the very same, and so without end, and without any improvement. But besides that this notion, which is also entertained by the *Hindoos*, and probably came into *Greece* from the *East*, is destitute of all foundation, and could hardly be seriously believed by any man, how inferior is it to that kind of immortality that Christians are taught to expect! A state of existence that will not only have no end, but that will be continually improving; an idea most sublime and transporting, and which is countenanced even by present appearances, as we actually observe the state of mankind, and of every thing we see, to be in a state of improvement.

Compared with the cold indifference, (and this, no doubt, in a great measure affected,) with which *Marcus Antoninus* speaks of meeting death, how short does it fall of the joy, and even rapture, with which the apostle *Paul* speaks of his approaching end! 2 *Tim.* iv. 6—8: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought *the* good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." What an idea does this give us of the infinite superiority of the principles of Christianity to those of Heathen philosophy of every kind!

The probability is, that *Marcus Antoninus* held the Christians (few of whom pretended to any knowledge of philosophy) in too great contempt to make any proper inquiry into their sentiments, or to read their writings. He had learned, he says, "of Diognetus not to spend his time about trifles, nor to give credit to those who dealt in inchantments and exorcisms, and other impostures of that nature."* And being under the influence, as he evidently was, of the *Greek* philosophers, and taking all his lessons from them, he was,

dispositions, in distant countries and successive periods, resigning whatever is most valuable and dear to the heart of man, from a principle of *obstinacy*, or the mere force of *habit*: not to say, that habit could have no influence on the first sufferers." *Ibid.* pp. 213, 214.

* *De Reb. L.* i. Sect. iii. (*P.*) *Med.* p. 47.

no doubt, taught to believe that all the miracles the Christians pretended to, as the foundation of their religion, were no better founded than such enchantments and exorcisms as many of the Heathens also pretended to.

So educated and instructed, he could not have any proper idea of the firm faith and hope of Christians, which, without any aid of speculative philosophy, enabled them to bear, with what he calls *obstinacy*, all the tortures that he, in so unrelenting a manner, ordered to be inflicted upon them. What could his boasted philosophy do in comparison with this? Thus was "the wisdom of this world," with every advantage that time and reflection could give it, mere *foolishness*, as the apostle called it, [1 Cor. i. 20,] compared with the simple doctrines of Christianity, which were intelligible and efficacious with the lowest and least exercised understanding, as well as the highest. Indeed, the admirable plainness, as well as superior excellence of its principles, levels all distinctions of this and of every other kind. *To the poor the gospel is preached*, as well as to the rich; and it is equally intelligible to them. According to the gospel, as in the eye of God, all men are equal. It is conferred as a common blessing on all his offspring of mankind.

But with this excellent religion *Marcus Antoninus* was unacquainted, and from his pride as a philosopher, which is sufficiently conspicuous in his writings; his contempt of the *new doctrine* of Christians, who made no account of his philosophy, or any other; his zeal for the welfare of the empire, at the head of which he was placed, and on which his glory depended, which, with all other Heathens, he imagined to have some unknown connexion with the observance of those ancient rites, in which the Christians refused to join; he might, without any particular cruelty in his disposition, direct the persecution which continued during the whole of his reign. It is farther probable that he only heard of the sufferings of the Christians through the unfavourable accounts of his officers, who would naturally be disposed to ridicule and make light of them, and to flatter him with respect to the success of his measures. And thus, without hearkening to any remonstrance or intreaty, and resisting, as his philosophy taught him to do, every motion of *compassion*, which he might think was farther unbecoming him as an emperor, he might persist as he did without remorse, in those rigorous proceedings as long as he lived. He had less knowledge of Christianity than *Julian*, and therefore less guilt; as in all respects he was a much superior character.

THE
PHILOSOPHY
 OF
SENECA AND ARRIAN.

INTRODUCTION.

SENECA and *Arrian* were both men of the world and statesmen; the former, tutor to *Nero*,* and the latter distinguished by the most honourable employments under *Adrian*,† and the succeeding emperors. But both of them were great writers, and both made profession of the *Stoic* philosophy. *Arrian* was a disciple of *Epictetus*, and the *Enchiridion* was composed by him from the sayings of his master.‡ *Seneca* appears to have been well acquainted with all the sects of the *Greek* philosophy, and he particularly quotes a great number of the sayings of *Epicurus*, but he preferred the philosophy of the *Stoics* to any other.

“Others,” he says, “proceed in a gentle manner, but the *Stoics* endeavour to raise men at once to the highest pitch of excellence.”§ This philosophy, indeed, may be said to have been the greatest effort of human genius on the important subject of *religion and morals*, in which the proper conduct of life, under all the evils of it, and the prospect of death, subjects so highly interesting to all men, are particularly insisted upon. I have, however, chosen to give the details of it from *Marcus Antoninus* and *Epictetus*, rather than from *Seneca* or *Arrian*, because the former, not being writers by profession, as we may consider the others to have been, may be supposed to have expressed their sentiments without exaggeration; so that we are in less danger of being misled by any thing like oratory in their works. Some

* See his Life in Enfield's *Hist. of Phil.* (B. iii. Ch. ii. Sect. vii.), II. pp. 120—126.

† He was Senator and Consul, and Priest of *Ceres* and *Proserpine*. See *Biographica Classica*, Ed. 2, 1750, p. 71.

‡ See his Dedication to *Lucius Gellius*, in Mrs. Carter's *Epictetus*, pp. xli. xlii.

§ *De Constantia Sapientis*, C. i. (P.)

valuable illustrations, however, of the *Stoical* principles will be found in the writings of *Seneca* and *Arrian*, and expressed with more emphasis, for which we may make what allowance we think proper.

SECTION I.

Of God and Providence.

THE Stoics strictly followed *Socrates* in the belief of the being, and of the wise and benevolent providence of a Supreme Intelligence, whether it resided in one subject or many. Indeed, on this, all their distinguishing maxims, especially that of the soul of man being a portion of this intelligence, and retaining its powers, depended. Other philosophers held various opinions on this subject. *Arrian* gives the following account of them :

“ Concerning the gods,” he says, “ some say there are no gods ; others, that they exist, but take no care of any thing ; others, that they exist, but take no care of any besides celestial things ; others, that they attend both to celestial and terrestrial things, but only in a general way ; others, like Ulysses and Socrates, say, that we cannot even move without God.”* *Arrian* himself proves the being of a God from the wonderful frame of the world.† He even supposes that God made the *sun*, which *Marcus Antoninus*, and the Heathens in general, supposed to be itself a deity. “ Can that God who made the sun and guides it,” he says, “ a small part of his works compared to the universe, not see all things ?”‡ *Seneca* also says, “ Such a system as this could not stand without the support of the Deity.”§ “ When you are most alone,” says *Arrian*, “ God is within you ; your genius is within you. Do they require light to see what you do ?”|| Like *Socrates*, the *Stoics* connected good morals with their regard to God. *Arrian*, having mentioned the Deity, says, “ Such as the Deity is, such will be those who endeavour to please him. If he be faithful, they will be so ; if he be beneficent, they will be so ; if he be magnanimous, they will be so.”¶ He shews at large the great danger that would not fail to result to society

* *Dissertationes in Epictetum*, L. i. C. xii. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. i. C. vi. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* L. i. C. xiv. (P.)

§ *Epistola*, xli. (P.)

|| *Dissert.* L. i. C. xiv. See also *Seneca* in *Ep.* xli. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* L. ii. C. xiv. (P.)

from a general neglect of religion. "Then," says he, "justice is nothing; modesty is folly; and the relation of father and son is as nothing."*

The constant presence and assistance of God was thought by some of the *Stoics* to be necessary to all good men. "There is no good man," says *Seneca*, "without God. No person can rise above fortune but as assisted by him. It is he that gives great and exalted counsels."† "God," he says, "removes from good men every evil, all wickedness, evil thoughts, blind lust, avarice," &c.‡ He did not, however, suppose that the divine guide of each particular person was a deity of the highest rank; for he says, "Every person has a god for his guide, but one of an inferior kind."§

The union of this intelligent principle, which occasionally descended to the earth, to the aid of men, is thus expressed by *Seneca*: "As the rays of the sun reach to the earth, but are still united to their source, so a great and sacred mind, being sent down hither, that we may have a nearer view of divine things, converses with us, but adheres to its original."||

It is not easy to say what the Heathen philosophers and others thought of *Fate*, and the relation that the gods bore to it. Sometimes they seem to have thought that they directed Fate; at other times that Fate was a power independent of them, and that controlled them. *Seneca* seems to have thought that Fate was nothing more than the will of the gods themselves. "The Author and Governor of all things," he says, "wrote the Fates, but he follows them. He orders, but always obeys."¶ "Some things must always please God, because the best things only please him. Nor is he on this account less free or powerful, for he is his own necessity. If this be not the case, it would not be worth while to be born."**

It was taken for granted by all the later philosophers, that the gods were incapable of *anger*, as well as all good men; and the natural consequence of this opinion was, that there could be no future punishment for the wicked, which took away a great motive against the commission of vice. "The immortal gods," says *Seneca*, "neither will any anger, nor

* *Dissert.* L. ii. C. xx. (P.)

† *Ep.* xli. (P.)

‡ *De Providentia*, cvi. (P.)

§ *Ep.* cx. Those of this class of deities that attended women were by the Heathens called *Junos*. (P.)

|| *Ep.* xli. (P.)

¶ *De Prov.* C. i. (P.)

** *Questiones Physicæ*, L. i. *Præf.* (P.)

can indulge in any. Their nature is mild and placid, as remote from injuring others as themselves.”* “No man in his senses,” he says, “fears God, for it is madness to fear what is salutary; nor can any person love what he fears. No person is so much a child as to be afraid of Cerberus.”† And he joins the Epicureans in their contempt of every thing in the infernal regions.‡

It appears from the writings of *Arrian*, that the common people among the Heathens were very religious in their way. “No person,” he says, “leaves a port without sacrificing to the gods; nor do husbandmen sow without invoking Ceres. Would any person who should neglect such duties be safe?”§

He must have thought, however, that such rites as these took the place of duties of more importance, when he said, “By means of unseasonable divination, many duties are neglected.”||

SECTION II.

Of the Soul of Man and its Power.

WE have seen enough, it might be thought, of the consequences which the *Stoics* drew from their opinion of the derivation of the souls of men from the Supreme Intelligence, in ascribing to them similar powers, especially that of absolute self-sufficiency, and a total independence on every thing foreign to itself, even on the body, to which it is, however, necessarily connected at present. But arrogant as is the language of *Marcus Antoninus* and *Epictetus*, on this subject, it falls short of that of *Seneca*.

One obvious similarity between God and man is their relation to *matter*. “The place,” says *Seneca*, “that God has in the world, the mind has in man. He works upon matter, and the mind upon the body.”¶ But he surely could not think that the Supreme Mind was as necessarily attached to the material system as to be affected by every thing that passes in it, as the mind is by the affections of the body, which, though it may make light of it, has no power to free itself. The union of the soul with the Supreme Intelligence, notwithstanding its present separation from it, is thus maintained by *Seneca*: “There is nothing,” he says, “im-

* *De Ira*, L. ii. C. xxvii. (P.)

† *Ep.* xxiv. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* L. ii. C. vii. (P.)

† *De Beneficiis*, L. iv. C. xix. (P.)

§ *Dissert.* L. iii. C. xxi. (P.)

¶ *Ep.* lxxv. (P.)

proper in endeavouring to ascend from whence we came. Why should we not think there is something divine in a good man, since he is part of God? The whole system is one, and is God. We are his companions, and members of him.”*

To Christians, who believe that there is an infinite difference between God and man, and his infinite superiority to us, notwithstanding our being said to be *made in his image* and to resemble him in some respects, the language of *Seneca* respecting their equality is truly shocking. “A good man,” he says, “differs from God only with respect to time. He is his disciple, his emulator, and true offspring, whom he educates with severity, to prepare him for himself; but no real evil can befall a good man.”† “God,” he farther says, “is not superior to man in happiness, but only in time; and virtue is not greater for being of longer continuance.”‡ What he says above, of God training up good men to prepare them for himself, is a truly fine sentiment, though connected with so much extravagance.

Seneca goes beyond *Marcus Antoninus* in his boasting of the all-sufficiency of the mind of man with respect to happiness, and its independence on every thing foreign to itself. “It is,” he says, “in the power of every man to make himself happy.”§ With respect to himself, he says, “I assure you, I am not unhappy, (*miserum*,) and, moreover, that I cannot be so.”|| “If small things cannot affect a wise man, neither can greater things; if not a few, neither many.”¶ “I would persuade you never to pity a good man, for though he may seem to be miserable, he cannot be so.”**

To many this would seem a difficult attainment, but not so to our author. “What does reason require of man, but the easiest things, viz. to live according to nature?”†† “A wise man is no creature of imagination. There are many examples of it, and Cato seems to have exceeded what was required of him.”‡‡

This extraordinary power, it is evident, however, that *Arrian* restricts to philosophers. “Philosophy,” says he, “allows none to be free but those who have been instructed, (*παιδευμένοι*,) that is, God does not permit.”§§ Again he says, “Shew me a person who is sick and happy, in danger

* *Ep.* xcii. (P.) † *De Prov.* C. i. ii. (P.) ‡ *Ep.* lxxiii. (P.)

§ *De Consolatione ad Helvidium*, C. v. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* C. iv. (P.)

¶ *De Constant. Sap.* C. xv. (P.)

** *De Prov.* C. iii. (P.)

†† *Ep.* xli. (P.)

‡‡ *De Constant. Sap.* C. vii. (P.)

§§ *Dissert.* L. ii. C. i. (P.)

and happy, dying and happy, banished and happy, disgraced and happy; such a one is a Stoic.”* But, surely, such a one is rather a Christian, his source of consolation under the evils mentioned above, being infinitely superior to any that the *Stoics* could have recourse to, and accessible to persons of the meanest capacity, such as they could never have adopted, or indeed have understood, viz. the distinction of things within the power of the mind, and things foreign to it, in the sense of the *Stoics*. As to dying circumstances, there cannot, surely, be a question of the superior happiness of the Christian, for reasons obvious enough, and enlarged upon in the preceding Section.

The power of the mind over the body is rather more strongly expressed by *Arrian* than by any other *Stoic* writer. “My body,” he says, “is not me; its parts are nothing to me; death is nothing to me, let it come when it will.”† He supposes a dialogue between a *tyrant* and a *philosopher* that is truly curious for the extravagance of it: the *tyrant* says, “You shall die.” The *philosopher* replies, “But not lamenting. T. You shall be in chains. P. But not whining. T. You shall be banished. P. But what hinders my going laughing? T. Tell me your secrets. P. No, that is in my power. T. But I will throw you into chains. P. What say you, man? You may bind my feet, but Jupiter himself cannot change my resolution. T. I will throw you into prison, and strike off your head. P. And did I ever say that you could not strike it off? T. I will kill you. P. When did I say that I was immortal? These things,” he says, “must be thought of, and meditated upon.”‡

In one place, however, *Arrian* seems willing to make some allowance for the weakness of human nature, and especially on account of the necessary influence of the body over the mind. “If the gods,” he says, “were willing to grant us the command of the things that are out of our power, they could not do it; for while we are upon the earth, and are tied to such bodies and such companions, how is it possible but that things foreign to us must be an impediment to us?”§

Seneca, whose luxurious and splendid mode of living did but ill correspond with the maxims of his philosophy, and whose flattery of the emperor, whom he must have despised, was fulsome in the extreme, seems disposed to make still more allowance for the weakness of human nature than any other

* *Dissert.* L. ii. C. xix. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. iii. C. xxii. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* L. i. C. i. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* (P.)

of the *Stoics*. “I would prefer pleasure,” he says, “to pain, if the choice was proposed to me, because the former is more agreeable to nature, and the latter contrary to it.”* But for the very same reason, is not every thing that men call *good* more agreeable to nature than those things they agree to call *evils*? And how, on this concession, could pleasure and pain be classed among the things that are perfectly indifferent to a philosopher?

When his luxurious life was objected to him, he said, after reciting the particulars of it, “These things are *apud me*, (in my possession,) but at the same time they are *extra me*, (foreign to me,) that is, to my mind.”† A pretty nice, but convenient distinction! According to him, a more ingenuous acknowledgment was made by *Plato* and *Epicurus*, when the same objection was made to them: for they said, “that men should live according to what they thought, not as they themselves lived.”‡ It is not probable, however, that either of these men would have said this in earnest; others may have said it for them, as Jesus did of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*.

SECTION III.

Of Moral Precepts.

ARRIAN has many excellent moral precepts; but as they are similar to those of *Marcus Antoninus* above-recited, they need not be repeated here. Among other things, he says, “Life is a thing indifferent, but not so the use of it; difficulties shew who are men.”§ “When you meet with them, remember that God is making you engage with a rough and expert antagonist.”||

As the *Stoics* made no allowance for the indulgence of any *passion* or *emotion*, which they referred to mere animal nature, they equally condemned *anger* and *compassion*. “Anger,” says *Seneca*, “is never to be indulged, but only the appearance of it, to excite others as a spur to a horse.”¶ “A good man is incapable of inflicting punishment; but anger is a punishment, and, therefore, anger is not natural.”** On this subject, as well as on every other, how much more natural is the doctrine of the Scriptures, which aims not at the extirpation of any of our passions, but only at the due

* *Ep.* lxvi. (P.)

† *Ibid.* C. xviii. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* L. i. C. xxiv. (P.)

** *Ibid.* C. vi. (P.)

† *De Vita Beata*, C. xxv. (P.)

§ *Dissert.* L. ii. C. vi. (P.)

¶ *De Ira*, L. ii. C. xiv. (P.)

regulation of them! "Be ye angry, *but* sin not. Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." [*Ephes.* iv. 26.] "Compassion," says *Seneca*, "is a vice of the mind, in the view of the miseries of others."* "A wise man will relieve a person that weeps, but he will not weep with him. He will relieve the distressed, but without feeling compassion."†

On the subject of *self-murder*, *Arrian* seems to be inconsistent. "God," he says, "requires such a world as this, and those that are in it. If he order a retreat, as in the case of *Socrates*, we should yield obedience as to a commander-in-chief."‡ But on another occasion he supposes that men have a right to judge for themselves in this case, without waiting for the orders of any superior. Addressing a discontented person, he says, "You slave, if you be not satisfied, go out of life. The gate is open."§

Seneca is quite decided in favour of the latter opinion. "If you dislike life," he says, "the door is open. If you will not fight, you may fly."|| He frequently commends *Cato* for putting an end to his own life: he even says, "Take away the sword from *Cato*, and you take from him a great part of his glory."¶

The indifference that he expressed to life or death would appear affected, as his language certainly is on other occasions, but that he actually did meet death with sufficient fortitude, at the command of a cruel and capricious tyrant. "Death," he says, "is so far from being to be feared, that nothing is to be preferred to the benefit to be derived from it."** *Lipsius*, however, proposes another reading, which softens this; he also says, "We know what death is: it is to be what we were before we were born, when we had no sense of *evil*."†† But it follows from this, that neither shall we have, after death, a sense of any *good*. And this seems to have been the real opinion of all the later Heathen philosophers, notwithstanding what they sometimes say of the immortality of the soul. When, in his eloquent manner, he describes the destruction and renovation of the world, he says, "We also, happy souls, when it shall please God to renew all things, shall only be a small addition to the immense ruin, and shall be changed into the ancient elements."‡‡

* *De Clementia*, L. ii. C. iv. (P.)

† *Ibid.* C. vi. (P.)

‡ *Dissert.* L. i. C. xxix. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* C. ix. (P.)

|| *De Prov.* C. vi. (P.)

¶ *Ep.* xiii. (P.)

** *Ibid.* xxiv. (P.)

†† *Ibid.* liv. (P.)

‡‡ *De Consolatione ad Marciam*, C. xxv. (P.)

What he says to Marcia, of her son being received by the *Scipios* and *Catos*, &c., after his death,* could only be said by way of accommodation to her opinion, and as a topic of consolation, and not his own real belief.

THE

PHILOSOPHY OF EPICURUS.

INTRODUCTION.

THE only sect of *Grecian* philosophy that remains to be considered, as coming within my object of a comparison of them with the system of revelation, is that of *Epicurus*, which arose presently after that of the *Stoics*, to which it was, in many respects, opposite and hostile; the one being remarkable for its austerity, and the other for its ease in the conduct of life; the one for a belief in a Divine Providence, as superintending every thing in the world, and the other for the utter neglect and contempt of religion in every form. There was also another source of opposition and hostility between the two: all the philosophers who had preceded *Epicurus*, the *Stoics* among the rest, had deserted the plain maxims of *Socrates*, and spent the greatest part of their time on *Logic* and *Metaphysics*, of no use whatever in the conduct of life; whereas *Epicurus*, following the steps of their common master, held all their subtle disputations on these subjects in the greatest contempt, and made the true enjoyment of life the great object of his philosophy. And considering that the great doctrine of a future state was in fact excluded from all their systems, there was more of reason and good sense in the maxims of *Epicurus* than in theirs; especially as, though he maintained that pleasure was the great end of life, he did not, as we shall see, mean sensual pleasure, but the happiness of man upon the whole, in which temperance, and every virtue, was an essential ingredient.

Epicurus also differed from other philosophers in the cir-

* *De Consolatione ad Marciam*, C. xxv. (P.)

cumstances of his teaching, more resembling a society of friends, than that of master and scholars. Their meetings were held in a private garden of his own;* and the friendship of this fraternity *Cicero* spake of in the highest terms,† though they had not every thing in common, like the disciples of *Pythagoras*.

Though we have no proper *treatise* of *Epicurus's*, we have several of his *letters* preserved by *Diogenes Laertius*, especially one to *Herodotus*,‡ in which he professes to give an outline of his principles. And the poem of *Lucretius* contains a developement of the whole of his philosophy. From these it is easy to form a very complete idea of his tenets; and from these, and some of his sayings quoted by *Seneca*, the following account is given.

SECTION I.

Of God and of the Structure of the Universe.

EPICURUS's triumph over religion in all its forms, and thereby delivering men from the fear of death, was the great boast of all his followers. This victory, *Lucretius* says, has raised men from earth to heaven,§ and by this means he has conferred greater benefit on mankind than *Ceres* in giving them bread, or *Bacchus* in giving them wine.|| Religion he considered as having done unspeakable mischief to mankind, and, in particular, instances the sacrifice of *Iphigenia*, the daughter of *Agamemnon*, to *Diana*, of which he gives a very affecting description.¶

Epicurus did not, however, deny the existence of gods; and though this is commonly thought to have been only

* "Il acheta un beau jardin qu'il cultivoit lui-même: C'est-là où il établit son école; il y menoit une vie douce et agréable, avec ses disciples qu'il enseignoit en se promenant et en travaillant, et leur faisoit répéter par cœur les préceptes qu'il leur donnoit. On venoit de tous les endroits de la Grèce pour avoir le plaisir de l'entendre et de le considérer dans sa solitude." *Fenelon*. See *Abrégé des Vies des anciens Philosophes*, Amst. 1727, pp. 231, 232.

† Here was a reference, in the *Northumberland* edition, to *Acad. Lib. xx.*, which was, probably, an error of the press. Dr. Priestley had, no doubt, in recollection the following passage in *De Finibus*: "—Epicurus una in domo, et ea quidem angusta, quam magnos, quantaque amoris conspiratione consentientes tenuit amicorum greges! Quod fit etiam nunc ab Epicureis." L. i. C. xx. *Olivet*, 1753, II. p. 157. (How numerous the friends, and how united by affectionate attachment, whom Epicurus entertained in one lowly dwelling! Such is now the manner of the Epicureans.)

‡ "Lives, &c. of the most famous ancient Philosophers," 1696, pp. 206—235.

§ *De Rerum Natura*, L. i. 79, 80. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* L. v. 13—21. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* L. i. 83—102. (P.)

with a view to his safety ; since by an open profession of Atheism he would have been exposed to the rigour of the *Athenian* laws, I think he might have been very sincere in that opinion ; thinking, with all other philosophers, that every part of the universe was replete with inhabitants, suited to their natures, the gods occupying the higher regions, dæmons the middle, and men the earth. What he openly maintained was, that though there are gods, they take no thought about the affairs of this world. “ The gods,” he says, “ are immortal and happy beings,—but not such as the vulgar opinion makes them to be ;” * and having said that happiness is twofold, he adds, that “ supreme happiness is that of the gods, which admits of no addition.” †

The reason that he gives for this opinion is, that happiness could not consist with the trouble and care which he thought must attend the government of the world, though he seems to have thought that they had something to do in the upper regions, which are nearest to them. Speaking of the motions and other properties of meteors, he says, “ They are not directed by any thing besides the order and appointment of Him who has all happiness and immortality. For it is inconsistent with happiness to have business and cares, or to be affected by anger or favour. These belong to beings subject to infirmity and fear, who stand in need of others.” ‡ Again he says, “ Whoever is happy and immortal, neither has any troublesome business himself, nor gives trouble to others ; and in consequence of this he is moved neither by anger nor favour.” §

As to the charge of impiety, he says, “ He is not guilty of impiety who takes from the multiplicity of gods, but he who adopts the opinion of the multitude concerning them.” || *Lucretius* ascribes the origin, and the frightful effects of religion upon the human mind, in part to what people see, or imagine they see, in dreams, as well as to the regular course of the heavenly bodies, and to the terror excited by storms, thunder, lightning, earthquakes, &c. For seeing no cause of these things, men ascribed them to some unknown invisible beings, whose power was great and tremendous. ¶

Considering the vulgar superstition, and the serious effects

* *Diogenes Laertius*, p. 785. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 262.

† *Diog. Laert.* pp. 783, 784. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 260.

‡ *Diog. Laert.* p. 755. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 735. (P.)

|| *Ibid.* p. 786. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 262.

¶ *De Rer. Nat. L. v.* 1164—1186. (P.)

of it in human sacrifices, prostitutions in religious rites, divination, and its destructive influence in the common business of life, it may well be questioned whether it was not wiser, with *Epicurus*, to reject it altogether, than to retain it in any form or degree. Nay, I doubt not but the system of *Polytheism* and *Idolatry* took more from the happiness of mankind than either *Epicurus* or *Lucretius* suspected. *Epicurus*, however, well knew that none of the philosophers maintained the vulgar opinions, but much more honourable ideas of the Divinity and the government of the world, opinions highly pleasing to good men, and perhaps some restraint upon the wicked; and we shall see that his ideas of the government of the world, and the direction of it, which differed exceedingly from those of other philosophers, were absurd in the extreme, in supposing that there was no wisdom, design, or a regard to final causes, in things that most of all required them.

The *Atomical* system, which was opposed to that of *Plato*, and most other philosophers, who held that the world was formed by an intelligent principle, out of pre-existent matter, and that it was finite, was first suggested by *Democritus*, but adopted by *Epicurus*. He maintained that there was no wisdom employed in the arrangement of any part of the system, but that it arose from the fortuitous concourse of atoms, moving at random in all directions. "These atoms," he says, "have no properties besides those of figure, gravity and magnitude; but being perfectly hard, though of different forms, they are incapable of destruction, or change."* The construction of the world, according to *Lucretius*, is too faulty to have arisen from a principle of intelligence and design.†

The universe having come into existence from these materials, "it must," *Epicurus* says, "be infinite; for had there been any bounds to it, the parts of which it consists would have been dispersed into infinite space; having no place to fix in, and nothing to stop their motion;"‡ moreover, since the giving these floating atoms every chance for their fortunate meeting, so as to form such a complete system as this, must have required almost infinite time before it could have taken place, he maintained, contrary to the opinion of many other philosophers, that "the world had a beginning, and will have an end;"§ since the con-

* *Diog. Laert.* p. 741. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 218.

† *De Rer. Nat.* L. ii. 180, 181. (P.)

‡ *Diog. Laert.* p. 733. (P.)

§ *Lucret.* L. v. 244—247. (P.)

tinual contention, and disposition to motion, in the elements of which it consists will, in course of time, effect its complete dissolution. He even thought there were already evident signs of a tendency to decay and dissolution in the earth, and that there has been a great degeneracy in all its productions, animals being now of less size and strength than they were formerly, and all the products of the earth requiring the labour of man, which they did not originally, when every thing for the use of man was produced by it spontaneously; so that in time every thing will probably decline more and more, and the whole go to decay and ruin.* But since nothing could be formed out of nothing, the atoms of which it consists can only be dispersed to form other systems, and can never be annihilated.† But before this event takes place, *Epicurus* maintained that, with the exception of the gradual decay mentioned above, “every thing is now as it ever has been, and will continue to be; since there is nothing into which it can be changed, and no superior power to make a change in it.”‡

In the same manner as this world was formed, viz. by the random concourse of atoms, since the universe has no bounds, “other worlds,” *Epicurus* says, “have, no doubt, been formed in the same manner; and there is no reason why there may not be an infinity of them, similar or dissimilar to this; for the atoms of which they are composed are infinite, and carried to the greatest distances.”§

Such wild and absurd schemes, altogether unworthy of examination or refutation, may the most ingenious of men be led to form for want of attention to a few fundamental principles, and those of the most obvious nature. For what can be more evident than that there are infinite marks of design, and what we call contrivance, in the structure of the world, and of every plant and animal in it? *Epicurus* must have maintained that the eye was not formed for seeing, nor the ear for hearing; but that being so formed, by this fortuitous concourse of atoms, they were found to be capable of these particular uses. Other philosopehrs, however, were not backward to acknowledge the reality of final causes, and consequently of design in the structure of the world, and of every part of it, and it is certainly unspeakably more satisfactory to acknowledge than to deny this. We

* *Lucret.* L. ii. 1149—1171. (P.)

† *Ibid.* L. i. 150, 151, 216, 217. (P.)

‡ *Diog. Laert.* p. 732. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 209.

§ *Diog. Laert.* pp. 735, 736. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 213.

have, then, some superior intelligence to look to, as a being to whom this world, and ourselves as a part of it, belong ; and who will take some care of what with such exquisite skill he has planned and executed.

SECTION II.

Of the Human Soul.

SINCE, according to *Epicurus*, every thing is in a perpetual flux, through the constant tendency to motion in its primary atoms, it could not be supposed that he would, with many other philosophers, maintain either the *pre-existence*, or the *immortality* of the soul. Accordingly he denies, and even ridicules, them both ; using, however, one just argument, though he was little aware of the real nature or extent of it, viz. “ All thought arises from the impression made on the bodily senses ;” * thinking it to follow from this, that the soul, on which the impressions were made, was equally corporeal with the objects from which they came.

His principal argument, however, is, that there is nothing in nature besides *body* and *space*, in which bodies can be placed and moved. “ There is nothing,” he says, “ but what can be handled,” or become the object of our senses. “ We cannot even form an idea of any thing else.” † “ Nothing,” he says, “ is incorporeal,” (which all other philosophers held the soul to be,) “ besides a *vacuum*, which only affords room for bodies to move in.” He adds, “ They who say that the soul is incorporeal, talk foolishly. (*Ματαίῳσις*ιν).” ‡

The soul, then, being corporeal, must be a part of the body, as much as the hands or the feet, § each having their several functions ; and as the soul had no pre-existence, it must have been produced at the same time with the body, grow up and decay with it. || Being a body, it must consist of particles of some particular kind or form, and “ those that constitute the soul,” he says, “ are the smallest and roundest of all ; but they must be dispersed when the body dies, as every other part of it is.” ¶

It is difficult to form any clear or consistent idea of

* *Diog. Laert.* p. 727. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 204.

† *Diog. Laert.* p. 732. (P.) ‡ *Ibid.* p. 749. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 225.

§ *Lucret.* L. iii. 94—96. (P.) || *Ibid.* 446—455. (P.)

¶ *Diog. Laert.* p. 748. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 225.

Epicurus's opinion concerning the different parts of the soul, of their several functions and place in the body. In his letter to *Herodotus*, he mentions only two parts, one that has reason, and another that is destitute of it. "The rational part," he says, "resides in the breast, as is manifest from the passions of fear and joy."* But, according to *Lucretius*, there are three, or even four parts in the soul; and yet when he speaks of three parts, he mentions only the *Animus* and the *Anima*; but the third seems to be the *breath* which leaves us when we die.† Afterwards, however, he says, that these three parts are not sufficient, but that "a fourth which has no name must be added, and this is the cause of universal sensation; though, like the other parts, it consists of the smallest particles of matter."‡ That *heat* enters into the composition of the soul, appears, he says, when we are angry, and in the habits of fierce animals, as lions, &c.; and that *air* is another part of it, appears when we are cool and serene, and in the cold dispositions of the deer and tame animals.§

Since the soul, according to *Epicurus*, is not immortal, death must be the extinction of our being; and the dread of this is represented by him and *Lucretius* as the greatest of all evils, and what most of all tends to embitter human life, as it must to those who have any enjoyment of it, and have nothing to look to beyond it. "Take a young man," he says, as he is quoted by *Seneca*, "an old man, or one of middle age, you will find them equally afraid of dying, though equally ignorant of life."|| In order to relieve the mind from this terror, he says, with other philosophers, "Accustom yourself to think that death is nothing to us. For both good and evil consist in sensation, and death is a privation of all sense." Again he says, "Death, the most dreadful of all evils, is nothing to us; because while we live death is not present, and when death comes we are not."¶ This poor witticism is not, however, calculated to give much consolation to a man who is sensible of the approach of death, and who is unwilling to part with life.

There are two sentences of *Epicurus's* concerning death, preserved by *Seneca*, which have more of good sense in them. "It is," he says, "ridiculous to fly to death through a wearisomeness of life, after living in such a manner as

* *Diog. Laert.* p. 748. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 225.

† *De Rer. Nat.* L. iii. 232—239. (P.)

‡ *Ibid.* 240—246. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* 289—307. (P.)

|| *Ep.* xxii. (P.)

¶ *Diog. Laert.* p. 786. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 263.

that death is the only and the last resource.”* Again, “Think whether it is more desirable for death to come to us, or for us to go to it; that is, since death will come, it is better to meet it cheerfully.”† But in vain are all the topics of consolation against the fear of death to men who love life, and yet have no hope of surviving the grave; and this hope is no where given but in revelation.

SECTION III.

Of Human Life and Happiness.

ADMITTING what, in fact, all the *Grecian* philosophers did, viz. that there is no future state, the maxims of *Epicurus* respecting this life, and the proper objects of choice in it, are far more reasonable than those of any of the other sects. Since (as he insinuates) there is no life beyond this, “It is,” he says, “our business to make the most of the things that are present, and exclude all causes of anxiety.”‡ “The end of all,” he says, “is to live well, and happily; for we do every thing to avoid grief and perturbation.”§ He therefore adds, that “pleasure is the end and object of life, but not all kinds of pleasure; for some we decline because they are all attended with more pain, and some pains we choose for the sake of the pleasures that follow them.”|| “Perturbation,” he says, “is incident to men in this life, especially to those who dread what, according to fabulous accounts, we may meet with after death, as if there was any thing after death.”¶ “But by living without perturbation, we live,” he says, “as gods among men.”** For this we have seen to be his idea of the state of the gods.

It is probable that *Epicurus* was led by natural inclination to a quiet, unambitious life. This he thought to be most favourable to the true enjoyment of it, and therefore he recommended it to others, and advised them to avoid whatever might interfere with it. “A wise man,” he says, “will marry and have children, but he will have no concern in public affairs.”†† This was probably to avoid every jealousy and opposition, with all the unpleasant consequences of them, unavoidable to men in public life; for it

* *Ep.* xxiv. (P.)

† *Ibid.* xxvi. (P.)

‡ *Diog. Laert.* p. 758. (P.)

§ *Ibid.* p. 788. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 265.

|| *Diog. Laert.* p. 789. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 266.

¶ *Diog. Laert.* p. 758. (P.) *Lives*, II. pp. 233, 234.

** *Diog. Laert.* p. 759. (P.)

†† *Ibid.* p. 782. (P.) *Lives*, II. pp. 258, 259.

could not be from idleness, in a man who wrote so many books, and who employed so much of his time in the instruction of others. From a similar motive, he might say, "A wise man will make use of poems, but will not compose any himself."* Agreeably to this he says, "The happiness of life does not require vanity, or vain glory," which he might think to be particularly conspicuous in poets, "but tranquillity and security."†

In order to secure his favourite tranquillity, he recommended the practice of universal virtue; and according to all accounts his own life was without reproach in this respect. "The virtues," he says, "are chosen for the sake of pleasure, and not on their own account;"‡ which is true when properly explained; for when the two are compared, happiness appears to be the *end*, and virtue the *means*, though the necessary means, to attain it.

He justly represents the chief cause of perturbation, and consequently of unhappiness in general, to be wrong dispositions of mind, which he says it is the business of philosophy to correct. "What men suffer," he says, "from hatred, envy or contempt, a man may overcome by reason; and he who has once been wise will not acquire different habits, or yield to any cause of perturbation, or to any thing else that may retard his progress in knowledge."§ "A wise man," he says, "will not be affected if another be said to be wiser than he."|| On this account he recommends an application to philosophy at all times of life. "If any person say it is too soon or too late to apply to philosophy, it is," he says, "the same thing as if he said it is too late or too soon to be happy."¶

The life of *Epicurus* was, according to all accounts, conformable to his precepts; and so far were he and his disciples from habits of self-indulgence, that no persons lived more abstemiously, using the plainest food, and drinking little besides water.** What he himself says on this subject is particularly deserving of attention. "We consider fru-

* *Diog. Laert.* p. 784. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 260.

† *Diog. Laert.* p. 761. (P.) ‡ *Ibid.* p. 795. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 270.

§ *Diog. Laert.* p. 781. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 257.

|| *Diog. Laert.* p. 784. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 260.

¶ *Diog. Laert.* p. 785. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 260.

** *Diog. Laert.* p. 713. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 169. "Epicure ne vivoit en tout tems que de pain et d'eau, de fruit et de légumes qui croissoient dans son jardin. Il disoit quelquefois à ses gens: Apportez-moi un peu de lait et de fromage, afin que je puisse faire meilleure chère quand je voudrai. Voilà, dit *Laërce*, quelle étoit la vie de celui qu'on a voulu faire passer pour un voluptueux. *Cicéron* dans ses *Tusculanes*, s'écrie: Ah! qu'*Epicure* se contentoit de peu!" *Fenelon*, p. 232.

gality," he says, "as a great good, not that we should always live sparingly, but that when we cannot do otherwise, we may be satisfied with a little, and have a greater enjoyment of abundance when we have it. Plain bread and water give the greatest pleasure when they are wanted; and to accustom one's self to plain food, not exquisitely prepared, contributes both to health and activity for all the purposes of life, and makes us not to dread bad fortune. When, therefore, we say that pleasure is the end of life, it is not the pleasure of the luxurious and the spendthrift, which consists in eating and drinking to excess, which some, through ignorance or perverseness say that we maintain, but to be free from pain of body and to enjoy tranquillity of mind, free from all perturbation. There is no living pleasantly but by living prudently, honourably, and justly; for the virtues are connected with a delightful and pleasant life, and cannot be separated from them."* *Epicurus* must have been of a pleasant, social, and benevolent turn of mind, to have attached so many persons to him as is universally acknowledged that he did.† He says, "The most valuable thing in life, is the acquisition of friendship."‡

I shall conclude this article with some valuable sayings of *Epicurus's*, quoted by *Seneca*. "If you live according to nature, you will never be poor, but if you live according to the opinion of others, you will never be rich."§ "The man who lives upon bread and water can never be poor; and he who can confine his desires to this, may vie with Jupiter for happiness."|| "First consider with whom you eat and drink; and then what you eat and drink."¶ "They live ill who are always beginning to live."**

Thus we have seen that, at the commencement of our inquiry, all the more intelligent *Greeks* retained the belief of the existence of one Supreme Being, the maker of the world, and of all things in it, though aided by a multiplicity of inferior ones in the government of it: of the constant

* *Diog. Laert.* p. 790. (P.) *Lives*, II. pp. 266, 268.

† See *supra*, p. 510, Note †. "Il étoit doux et affable à tout le monde; il avoit une tendresse si forte pour ses parens et pour ses amis, qu'il étoit entièrement à eux, et leur donnoit tout ce qu'il avoit. Il recommandoit expressément à ses disciples d'avoir compassion de leur esclaves; il traitoit les siens avec une humanité surprenante; il leur permettoit d'étudier, et prenoit le soin de les instruire lui-même comme ses propres disciples." *Fenelon*, p. 282. How many *Christian masters* have sunk miserably below *Epicurus* by their inconsiderate and cruel treatment of slaves! See Vol. XV. p. 378, Note *.

‡ *Diog. Laert.* p. 801. (P.) *Lives*, II. p. 278.


§ *Ep.* x. (P.) || *Ibid.* xxv. (P.)

¶ *Ibid.* xix. (P.)

** *Ibid.* xxiii. (P.)

attention of this great Being to all human affairs, of his love of virtue, and abhorrence of vice, and of such an administration of the world, as that the wicked will generally meet with their due punishment, and the virtuous with their proper reward ; that the souls of all men are immortal, and will be more fully rewarded or punished, according to their deserts, in a future state. But as we have advanced, we have found these principles and motives of moral conduct grow more obscure, till at last they entirely vanished ; other principles, utterly inconsistent with them, being generally received ; as that of the derivation of all human souls from the substance of the Supreme Being, and their final absorption into the same source again, all individual consciousness being thereby lost. The last of these sects, viz. that of the *Epicureans*, who discovered more good sense and consistency in other respects, disclaimed all belief of wisdom and design in the construction of the universe, and of the providence of God in any of the affairs of men. At this time, too, the last period of Heathen philosophy, all the sects, without exception, had abandoned the belief of a future state of any kind ; and yet with respect to mental ability, the founders of these sects may be classed among the first of the human race ; sagacious, thoughtful, and laborious, in the extreme. What prospect was there, then, of the world ever becoming more enlightened, by human wisdom ? and the experiment was continued a sufficient length of time, from *Pythagoras* to *Marcus Antoninus*, a space of about seven hundred years.

But what men could not do for themselves, it pleased God to do for them ; and after giving much light to one particular nation, *in the fulness of time*, he sent Jesus Christ, with abundant evidence of a divine mission, to be the light of the whole world. His doctrine, in a reasonable time, through the instrumentality of men, to appearance the least qualified for the undertaking, and in spite of all opposition from power, from prejudice, and from Heathen philosophy, established itself, to the utter overthrow of all preceding religions, which having been maintained from time immemorial, and thought to be connected with the well-being of every state, had ever been held the most sacred. At present no doubt is entertained by any Christian of the being or providence of God in this state, or of a righteous retribution in another ; so that nothing is wanting, no *principle* or *motive* whatever, to the virtue and happiness of man, but his receiving this divine light, and living according to it.



APPENDIX.

No. I.

AN ILLUSTRATION OF WHAT IS ADVANCED, p. 22, CONCERNING THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-INTEREST.*

THOUGH a regard to men's own interest is often the reason why they perform virtuous actions, and consult the good of others, yet a love of others is originally generated in a manner independent of it, and even prior to it, from pleasing sensations in any way connected with other persons. A child becomes attached to its nurse and to its parents, from the pleasure it receives from them, and also from the remains of pains falling within the limits of pleasure, according to the observations of Dr. Hartley. He is pleased to see them pleased, from his having had most pleasure himself when he perceived them to be so. This gives him in time a habit of endeavouring to please them; but when this affection and habit is once formed, it is so independent of the elements of which it was composed, that few persons have any idea of the process by which it is generated; and in time the desire to make others happy is as confirmed, and influences us as instantaneously, as the desire of self-preservation; insomuch, that many philosophers have supposed it to be an original instinct, natural to man, and not generated from any elements, after our birth.

This is most evidently the case with brute creatures, with respect to their offspring, and certainly without any attention to their own interest or happiness, of which it is probable they never have any idea, always acting from the influence of immediate impressions, without any thing that we call reflection. Besides, whatever be the cause, parents are more attached to their children than children are to their parents, and with as little view to any advantage they may receive from them; so that, whatever private pleasure or satisfaction may have had to do in the formation of this affection, it becomes, and very soon, perfectly disinterested; and, therefore, the same may be, and no doubt is, the case with respect to general benevolence. If you ask a truly benevolent person *why* he is so, he can no more give any account of it than he can of the reasons why he loves himself; and the attempt to derive it from the principle of self-love will probably appear to him to be very far-fetched and improbable.

Few of the actions of men, even the most selfish, have for their immediate and proper motive a regard to their general interest. If this was the case, they would study it more, and act more rationally and wisely than they do. Their only object is the gratification of some particular propensity; and that of doing good to others, or the principle of benevolence, when it is once formed, acts as instantaneously and mechanically as that of hunger or thirst. At the time, no doubt, it would give a benevolent person more uneasiness to repress his inclination than to indulge it, and, therefore, he has

* This formed Section IX. of the *Observations*, Ed. 2.

most satisfaction in acting as he does ; but in this sense every action of a man's life may be said to be selfish, and in the nature of things it cannot be otherwise. This is the case not only when men risk, or actually sacrifice their lives for the good of others, but when they do it from a principle of honour, or the dread of shame. But this is a very different thing from a man's acting with a deliberate view to avoid the pain or procure the pleasure ; and if any man can be brought ardently to wish, and steadily to pursue the good of others, without any regard to his private advantage, though he have the highest gratification in this benevolent conduct, it is the most properly disinterested that can even be imagined. The same observation will apply to the principle of obedience to the will of God and the dictates of conscience. When these become men's immediate motive of action, and they have no satisfaction equal to that of being uniformly governed by them, it is the most perfect virtue, and the highest perfection of character that they can attain to.

The proper rule of *right*, with respect to any institution or piece of workmanship, is the intention of the author of it. The proper conduct of a boy at school is to conform to the rules of it, which were laid down by the master, with a view to the improvement of his scholars; and that precise number of wheels in a clock, and that disposition of them is right, which best answers the purpose of the maker of it. For the same reason, therefore, right conduct in men, as beings under the moral government of their Maker, is a conformity to his will, it being taken for granted, that his will and object is the happiness of his creatures. A Christian being fully persuaded of this, will make this his object; and, endeavouring to overlook his individual interest, he will act that part which he conceives his Maker and the good of his fellow-creatures require, though it lead to danger, suffering, and even death.

Every intelligent being will, no doubt, consult his own interest, and make this his ultimate object, when he does not act from any particular impression, but from cool reflection. But the Christian has a full persuasion that, in his case, it is needless, and even injurious to him; being satisfied that, if he does his duty, he who is a better judge than himself will take the best care of his true interest; and though he abandon every possible advantage in this life, he will find it in another. On the other hand, an unbeliever in a future state, must necessarily have his views bounded by *this*, and if he act from his best reason, he will sacrifice every thing to this life and the enjoyment of it, because it is his *all*. In this case, however, we see what power a sense of shame, a feeling of patriotism, and other principles (which, being once formed, act mechanically) have, to carry men to despise danger and death, equal, in many cases, to that of the Christian martyrs; but they cannot do it with the same certainty, because in the Christian there is no opposition between the dictates of his coolest reflection and any other approved principle of action; whereas with the *unbeliever* they are much at variance.

Admitting *believers* and *unbelievers* to be governed by the principles of self-interest, (though the most selfish are by no means

uniformly so,) the man who, with a steady eye, can contemplate an interest beyond the grave, and sacrifice every interest he has in this world to it, is a character much superior to him whose views do not go beyond it, as much so as the character of a man is superior to that of a child, and for the same reason. He will also more easily enter into other great views, and acquire a greater command of his passions, in which consists the superiority of men to children and to brutes.

No. II.

M. VOLNEY'S ASSERTIONS CONCERNING THE THEOLOGY OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS, AND THE ANTIQUITY OF THE WORLD EXAMINED.

[See *supra*, p. 97.]

AFTER this work was sent to the press, a learned friend, who has read M. Volney's *Ruins* with more attention than I have done, has observed to me, that in several instances his Notes are insufficient for the support of his text. Of this he particularly mentions two examples: after representing men, in their primitive state, as confining their worship to natural objects, he says, with an air of triumph, "And you, doctors, we appeal to you: say if this be not the unanimous testimony of all the ancient monuments?"* His authority for this is only a quotation from *Eusebius*, who quotes a passage from a work of *Plutarch*, in which this is only said to have been the opinion of *Cheræmon* and others, and this only with respect to the Egyptians.† So that this solitary opinion of *Cheræmon*, who may be called a modern, for he lived in the first century after Christ, stands in the place of *all ancient monuments*. What the *Egyptians* really thought with respect to the divinity, is by no means certain, but it is very possible that their worship of animals, and other natural objects, arose from their considering them as representing the divine attributes, though afterwards their worship was directed to those objects themselves.

* *Ruines*, p. 217. (P.) "Et vous, docteurs, nous vous en attestons; dites-nous si tel n'est pas le témoignage unanime de tous les anciens monumens?" *Ibid.*

† *Ibid.* p. 345. (P.) This statement, by Dr. Priestley's friend, is not quite correct. *Plutarch* refers only to the *Orphic* verses and the sacred books of the *Egyptians* and *Phrygians*. It is *Porphry*, by whom *Cheræmon* is given as an authority.

Volney says, "Il résulte clairement, dit *Plutarque*, (fragment d'un ouvrage perdu, cité dans *Eusèbe*, *Præpar. Evang.* Lib. iii. C. i. p. 88,) des vers d'*Orphée*, et des livres sacrés des *Egyptiens* et des *Phrygiens*, que la *théologie* ancienne, non seulement des *Grecs*, mais en général de tous les peuples, ne fut autre chose qu'un *système de physique*, qu'un tableau des opérations de la Nature, enveloppé d'allégories mystérieuses et de symboles énigmatiques." It is immediately added, "La plupart des philosophes, dit *Porphyre*, (*Epist. ad Janchonem*,) et entre autres, *Cheræmon*, (qui vécut en *Egypte* dans le premier siècle de l'ère Chrétienne,) ne pensent pas qu'il ait jamais existé d'autre monde que celui que nous voyons; et ils ne reconnoissent pas d'autres Dieux, de tous ceux qu'allèguent les *Egyptiens*, que ce que l'on appelle vulgairement les *planètes*, les *signes du zodiaque*, et les *constellations* qui jouent avec eux en aspects." *Ibid.* pp. 345, 346.

The next instance is of a more serious nature than this: speaking of the antiquity of the present system, M. *Volney* says, that, "On the authority of the monuments of astronomy itself, it may be referred with certainty to near seventeen thousand years. If it be asked to what people this antiquity is to be ascribed, we answer, that these same monuments, supported by uniform traditions, attribute it to the first inhabitants of Egypt."* Looking for the authority of these monuments of astronomy, and these uniform traditions, I only find, "that M. *Dupuis* has collected many probable reasons for thinking that formerly the constellation *Libra* was at the vernal equinox;"† whence he computes that, the precession of the equinox being at the rate of about seventy years to a degree, the present system must be as ancient as he represents it. What M. *Dupuis's* probable reasons for so improbable an opinion are, M. *Volney* does not inform us. But according to Sir Isaac Newton, who has recited all that he could collect from ancient writers on the subject, there is no evidence whatever of the vernal *equinox* having been at any other time than when the sun entered the constellation *Aries*. Indeed, the necessary consequence of this *precession of the equinox*, through so many as seven signs, in the very different situation of the stars with respect to the sun, not having been observed before the time of *Hipparchus*, who, according to Sir Isaac Newton, made his observations about the year of *Nabonassar* 602, answering to 145 before Christ, is alone a proof that all M. *Dupuis's* probable reasons are of no weight, and that the antiquity ascribed to the world in the writings of *Moses* is far more probable than that of these writers. But if *Moses*, who is by far the oldest writer extant, had been mistaken in this respect, this circumstance would not affect the truth of his divine mission, and still less that of *Jesus*.

No. III.

M. FRERET'S ACCOUNT OF THE CONDITION OF THE PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANS CONSIDERED.‡

M. *Fréret*,§ taking advantage of the exaggerated representations of some Christian writers,|| who have rather boasted that the primitive Christians were not of the higher classes, but generally poor, maintains, "that they were universally such poor and abject

* *Ruines*, p. 221. (P.) "Si l'on demande à quel peuple il doit être attribué, nous répondrons que ces mêmes monumens, appuyés de traditions unanimes, l'attribuent aux premières peuplades de l'Egypte." *Ibid.* See *supra*, p. 126, Note §.

† *Ibid.* p. 349. (P.) See *supra*, p. 126, Note §.

‡ These observations should have been inserted in the *Section* concerning the ignorance and misrepresentations of Unbelievers; but I did not intend to take such particular notice of *Fréret* till after that *Section*, and also the *Preface*, were sent to press. (P.) See *supra*, pp. 75—89.

§ See *supra*, p. 10, Note *.

|| *Puffendorf*, *Father Maudit*, *Abbadie*, *Le Clerc*, (De l'Incrédulité, Pt. i. Ch. i.) and the Abbé *Houtteville*. See *Œuvres Complètes de Fréret*, à Paris, An. IV. (1796) XIX. pp. 119—122.

wretches as it is always easy to impose upon, and to make to believe the greatest absurdities on the slightest grounds, and without any examination.* He calls them "a mere populace, as credulous as they were incapable of examination;† whereas it is easy to collect from a variety of circumstances that this was very far from being the case, and that the primitive Christians were in general of that class of people whose testimony is always esteemed to be of the most value; at the same time that they were such as are the least apt to embrace new opinions.

It does not appear that any of the apostles, or of the other immediate followers of Jesus, were, properly speaking, *poor*. *Zebedee*, the father of *James* and *John*, had a ship of his own, and hired servants, (*Mark* i. 20,) which they left to follow Jesus. *Peter*, who had a house at *Capernaum*, and who, together with his brother *Andrew*, were of the same occupation, appear to have been men in similar circumstances. *Peter* said to Jesus, (*Mark* x. 28,) "*Behold we have left all and followed thee;*" which implies that himself and all the other apostles, in whose names he spoke, could boast of their having had something to leave.‡ *John* had some connexion with the high-priest *Caiaphas*, and had a house of his own in or near *Jerusalem*, in which he received the mother of Jesus after his crucifixion. (*John* xix. 27.) *Matthew* was a *publican*, or tax-gatherer, and must have been rich, since, on his becoming a follower of Jesus, he "made a great feast," (*Luke* v. 29,) to which he invited not only Jesus and his companions, but likewise his former acquaintance and brethren in office; and surely such men as these would not join themselves to a company of mere beggars! Poor as Jesus and his companions may be said to have been, it appears to have been their custom to give to the poor, for *Judas* is said to have "had the bag" (*John* xii. 6) for that, as well as other purposes.§

Mary Magdalene, and another woman who occasionally accompanied Jesus, "ministered unto him of their substance;" (*Luke* viii. 3;) and I hope they will not at this day be despised on account of their sex. *Mary* the sister of *Lazarus* poured so much precious ointment on the head of Jesus a little before his death, as to excite some murmuring against her on account of her profusion. (*John* xii. 5.) The funeral of *Lazarus* was attended in such a manner as proves that the family was opulent. *Joseph of Arimathea*, who begged the body of Jesus, was a rich man, and in a sepulchre of his, hewn out of a rock, was Jesus buried. His friends had also procured a great quantity of the most costly spices, with which to embalm him. While Jesus lived he could not have appeared in a

* "Examen critique des Apologistes de la Religion Chrétienne," p. 115. (*P.*) *Fréret*, availing himself of the representations made by Christian apologists, says, with an evident reference to the first *Christian* converts, "Les histoires anciennes sont remplies de faits qui nous apprennent que le peuple ne manque jamais de se laisser tromper; des que quelqu'un a la hardiesse de vouloir le séduire, et qu'il reçoit presque toujours les plus grandes absurdités sur le plus léger fondement et sans aucun examen." *Œuvres*, XIX. p. 124.

† *Examen*, p. 116. (*P.*) "Une populace aussi crédule qu'incapable d'examen." *Œuvres*, XIX. p. 125.

‡ See, on *Matt.* xix. 27, Vol. XIII. p. 260.

§ See, on *Luke*, v. 11, Vol. XIII. p. 67.

very contemptible light, even to his enemies, for he and his friends were sometimes invited to the tables of the rich *Pharisees*. All these are circumstances that do not mark indigence.

Among the very first converts to Christianity were Jews from all parts of the known world (*Acts* ii. 9—11), “Parthians and Medes, and Elamites, *inhabitants* of Mesopotamia, Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, and *Cyrene in Lybia, persons from Rome, Cretes, and Arabians.*” And they were only persons of considerable property, who could leave these distant countries and attend the public festivals at *Jerusalem*. The eunuch, a person “of great authority under Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, (*Acts* viii. 27,) who had the charge of all her treasure,” and who travelled in a chariot, could not have been poor.

Though many of the primitive Christians were poor, others had *possessions* which they sold for the common benefit. (*Acts* ii. 45.) *Barnabas* sold an estate which he had in Cyprus. (*Acts* iv. 36.) Among the most early converts were “a great company of the priests,” (*Acts* vi. 7,) and these were of the highest class of persons in the country.* *Paul*, who was educated at the feet of *Gamaliel*, who was employed by the high priests in the prosecution of the Christians, and who travelled to *Damascus* for that purpose, must have been a man of some fortune as well as education. *Cornelius*, the first Gentile convert, was a *centurion*, and highly respectable on every account; and *Sergius Paulus*, the Roman governor of Cyprus, was a person of still higher rank. The disciples at *Antioch* were able to send relief to the poor Christians at *Jerusalem*, as they did “by the hands of *Barnabas* and *Saul.*” (*Acts* xi. 30.) Of the Gentile converts many must have been opulent; for they sent liberal contributions to *Jerusalem* for the same purpose. There were Christians in the household of *Nero*, and a near relation of the emperor *Domitian*, (*Flavius Clemens*.) was consul at Rome, and suffered martyrdom at the expiration of his consulship, at the same time that his wife *Flavia Domitilla* was sent into banishment, as was a niece of his of the same name.† In the apostolic epistles we find exhortations to the rich as well as to the poor, which shews that then, as well as now, there were among Christians, persons of both classes.

Many of the Christian churches, in very early times, long before they had any legal establishment, were exceedingly wealthy, and besides maintaining a large body of clergy, they had funds for the relief of the poor, and other public uses. *Pliny* complains that the sacrifices to the Heathen gods had been almost wholly discontinued in his province of *Bithynia*,‡ which shews that the persons who had been at that expense, and which must have been very considerable, had become Christians. He also says, that there were Christians of all ranks, (*omnis ordinis*,) as well as of all ages, and of both sexes.§

As to literature, though the generality of the primitive Christians

* See Vol. XIII. p. 407.

† See Vol. VIII. p. 104; *Lardner*, VII. pp. 270—272; VIII. pp. 132—135.

‡ See *supra*, pp. 124, 125.

§ In *Lardner's* “Jewish and Heathen Testimonies,” [*Works*, VII. p. 292, *Note*,] the words *omnis ordinis* are omitted in the quotation from *Pliny*, though the translation is right. (*P.*) See *Pliny*, in Vol. VIII. p. 106, *Note*.

cannot be said to have been learned, they were far from being despicable in that respect. Jesus and all the apostles could preach, and dispute out of the Scriptures. The books of the *New Testament* prove at least that several of them could write, and Paul was probably as well educated as any *Jew* whatever. And contemptuously as it is the custom of modern *unbelievers* to treat the *Jews*, there was no ancient nation, I will even venture to say no modern one, in which the arts of reading and writing were so common. Compared with the *Jews* of that age, the great body of the *Greeks*, and much more that of the *Romans*, were barbarians in that respect.

The Christian church soon abounded with learned writers. *Justin Martyr* was a *Platonic* philosopher, and many of the bishops in the earliest times were writers, though not many of their productions are now extant. In the second century, the Christian writers greatly outnumbered those of the Heathens, and before the time of *Constantine*, the latter bore but a small proportion to the former. All the Heathen world in those times had no men to compare to *Origen*, or *Eusebius*, for genius, learning, or assiduity as writers. And we have hardly any account of a private library equal to that of *Pamphilus of Cæsarea*, who suffered martyrdom in the *Dioclesian* persecution.*

It would be easy to collect many more circumstances in proof of the very great respectability of the primitive Christians, whom modern *Unbelievers* affect so much to despise; but these few are sufficient to shew that they were not so despicable as *Fréret* represents them to have been. The generality of the primitive Christians were, no doubt, of the illiterate class; but such persons as these all history shews to have always been the last to adopt new opinions or customs, being the most tenacious of those in which they were educated; and therefore their conversion furnishes a better argument for the truth of Christianity than that of more speculative persons, who are most apt to innovate. On the whole, it is evident that the primitive Christians gave abundant proof of great integrity, openness to conviction, and strength of mind, in abandoning the superstitions in which they were educated; and their fortitude in risking every thing in the profession of what they deemed to be important truth, can never be denied.

Fréret also asserts, that "Christianity owed its principal increase to the violence of the Christian emperors,"† as if its principal increase had not been prior to their times. What made it safe for *Constantine* to declare himself a Christian in the face of several Heathen competitors for the empire, but a very general prepossession in favour of Christianity at that time? What made the emperor *Maximilian* confess, as he virtually did, that it was in vain to attempt the extirpation of Christianity by persecution; and when, after this, the tide of power turned to the side of Heathenism, under *Julian*, what was it that, with all his artifice, he was able to do in support of it?

* See Vol. VIII. pp. 255, 256, 238, 239.

† *Examen*, p. 119. (*P.*) "Le Christianisme doit son Principal Accroissement à la Violence des Empereurs Chrétiens." Such is the title of *Fréret's* seventh chapter. See *Œuvres*, XIX. pp. 128—143.

M. *Fréret*, in his account of the differences of opinion among the ancient sects of Christians, on the subject of the Gospel history, says of *Cerinthus*, that “he denied the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who he pretended was not to rise again but together with other men;”* and for this he quotes the authority of *Irenæus* and *Epiphanius*. Conversant as I have been with the writings of those who are usually called *the fathers*, this assertion appeared to me very extraordinary, and turning to the passages that he quotes, † I find that both these writers assert the direct contrary of what he ascribes to them. *Irenæus*, treating of the opinions of *Cerinthus*, says expressly, that he maintained that “Jesus suffered and rose again,” (*Jesum passum esse et resurrexisse*,) ‡ and *Epiphanius* says the very same thing, πεπονθота δε τον Ιησυν, και παλιν εγγεγεμενον. § It would have been extraordinary indeed, and greatly favourable to the purpose of infidelity, if any sect of Christians, of the age of the apostles, could be proved to have denied the resurrection of Jesus. But what can we think of a writer who can so shamefully misrepresent the very passages that he particularly refers to? All that *Cerinthus* and other *Gnostics* maintained was, that before Jesus suffered, the superangelic Being, who they said was the *Christ*, and had been united to him, left him. || But this makes nothing to M. *Fréret*’s purpose.

I might have extended this Section to animadvert upon other articles in the works of this celebrated writer. I will venture to say of them in general, what it would be very easy to prove, if necessary, that under the appearance of learned quotation and criticism, they contain nothing of the least importance with respect to which the facts he alleges are not greatly misrepresented, and false conclusions drawn from them; at the same time that other facts, which would shew the true state of things, are kept out of sight. What he advances concerning the condition of the primitive Christians and the opinion of *Cerinthus*, is only a specimen of the whole of his *Examen Critique*.

No. IV.

QUERIES RELATING TO THE RELIGION OF INDOSTAN.

(See *supra*, p. 134, Note §.)

To the Directors of the Theological Repository. ¶

GENTLEMEN,

IT has often been insinuated by Unbelievers in revelation, that the institutions of *Moses* rest on no better foundation than those of

* *Examen*, p. 5. (P.) “Il nioit la résurrection de Jésus-Christ, qu’il prétendoit ne devoir ressusciter qu’avec les autres hommes.” *Œuvres*, XIX. p. 6.

† “S. Irénée, L. i. C. xxvi. N. 1, p. 11; S. Epiphane, Hom. xxviii. p. 110.” *Ibid.* p. 5, Note.

‡ See the passage quoted at length in *Lardner*, IX. p. 319, Note a.

§ See *Ibid.* p. 321, Note o, *ad fin.*

|| See *Ibid.* pp. 319, 321.

¶ See *Theol. Repos.* 1788, VI. pp. 408—414.

the people of *Indostan*, that every thing of this remote antiquity is equally involved in obscurity, and that it may be taken for granted, without any particular examination, that they are either the contrivances of the wise, or the fancies of the foolish, but are not entitled to the consideration of men of sense in this more enlightened age. But they who talk or write in this loose manner, have not, I am persuaded, given due attention either to the nature of historical evidence, or to the remarkable difference between the circumstances of the institutions of *Moses* and those in the religion of the *Hindoos*, or of any other that have been opposed to them. Several of these circumstances are enumerated in Dr. Priestley's late *Letters to Philosophical Unbelievers*, Part II.*

Willing, however, to get what farther satisfaction I could on this subject, and not contenting myself with carefully attending to every thing I could find in *print* relating to it, I drew up a set of *queries*, which are sent to the most intelligent of our countrymen now residing in *Indostan*; and, as it must be a considerable time before any answer can come from so great a distance, I also submitted them to a gentleman of learning and character, who has resided much in the *East*, and who is, in all respects, as well qualified to give a satisfactory answer to them as any person now in Europe. These *answers*, together with the *queries* themselves, I, with his leave, submit to your disposal, without making any remarks on the nature and tendency of them, as to your intelligent readers such remarks will be unnecessary.

I am, Gentlemen, yours, &c.

SCRUTATOR.

DEAR SIR,

London, 8th November, 1787.

THE length of time that has intervened since you favoured me with your *Queries* respecting the religion of *Hindostan*, may well have induced you to think me inattentive to your request. The truth is, that whilst I was engaged in a pretty extensive course of reading on the subject, I was rather suddenly called to —, where I have been for some months past, and from whence I am but just returned.

I cannot say that I have been much enlightened by my studies. Amidst a number of fine moral truths, and many deep metaphysical speculations, you meet with a thousand absurdities and contradictions. Their mythology is inexplicably confused. Much of it is doubtless allegorical, and some part, probably, historical; but in general I cannot help thinking it mere nonsense, devised by idle priests, to amuse and astonish an ignorant multitude. These monstrous inventions being grafted on the historical and allegorical writings of their predecessors, have served to obscure and debase them, and they are now scarcely distinguishable in the mass. But I shall endeavour, as far as I am able, to give some sort of answer to your queries, in their order.

1st. "Do the four sacred books, called *Vedas*, contain any his-

* See Vol. IV. pp. 502, 503.

torical account of miracles wrought in proof of the divine mission of the writers of them, or of the person who first taught the doctrine contained in them?"

It seems to be very doubtful whether any copies of the *Véds* exist.* No European of credit ever pretended to have read them. Translations of some detached fragments have been given by *Halhed*, *Dow*, and others; but what we, and the *Hindoos* themselves, know of them, is through the medium of the various *shasters* or commentaries, written at different periods by learned *Brahmans*. The subjects of them, as collected from these authorities, appear to be, not historical, but dogmatical; unless we except their fanciful account of the creation of the world and of man, in which the writers do not very well agree amongst themselves. The original *Véds* were supposed to have been delivered by the hand of God to the first created being; but it seems to be admitted that those were lost, and that the books of that name, presumed now to exist, were compiled by a man of the name of *Veîâs*, who lived at the commencement of the present age of the world, or near five thousand years ago.† This period, you well know, is very vague, and I have in vain tried to find internal evidence of such antiquity, in those writings of *Veîâs* of which we have translations.

I must, however, remark, that a very accurate and ingenious French astronomer gives the *Hindoos* great credit for the extent and precision of their ancient astronomical calculations, which he endeavours to prove superior to those of the *Chaldeans* or *Chinese*. To answer this query more in point, I shall say, that I believe the *Véds* do not contain any historical accounts of miracles wrought in proof of a divine mission.

2d. "Is there any history of the writers of those books, and of the circumstances in which they were written?"

None such appears to have come to our knowledge, and I have reason to think that none which can be depended upon, exists. The dates quoted in the preface to the *Gentoo Code* of some ancient writings, of the first and third ages, are too *outré* to merit attention.‡

3d. "Is there any written history of the *Hindoo* nation, connecting the period in which those books were written, with that of the conquest of the country by the *Tartars*? If not, is there any account of the succession of kings, or generations of men, or data of any other kind, by which we may be able to ascertain the length of that interval?"

No history of this kind is mentioned by any good authority. That spoken of by Mr. Halhed is of the three earlier yagues or ages.§ In the *Mémoires de l'Académie des Inscriptions* there is an account of a MS. in the king of France's library, (frequently quoted in *L'Ezour Védam*,|| which, probably, you may have seen,) containing a chronological table of reigns, (given in the *Mémoires*,) but it bears no mark of fidelity or even of possibility. There are the

* See *supra*, p. 138, Note †.

† See *supra*, pp. 142, 143.

‡ See *Halhed's Preface to Gentoo Laws*, pp. xxxvi.—xliii.

§ See *ibid.* pp. xxxvi. xxxvii.

|| See *supra*, pp. 143, Note ‡, 157.

ances of the sun, and the races of the moon, and similar extravagances, but nothing that connects their ancient history with the period of the *Tartar* invasion.

4th. "Is the language in which the sacred books are written radically different from that which is commonly spoken in *Indostan*; or is the latter only a dialect of the other, or a gradual deviation from it? If it be radically different from the common language of the country, what is become of the people who spoke it?"

I am at present firmly of opinion that the languages are radically the same; that the *Sanskrit*, or language of the Sacred Writings, was the general one of *India*, but that being fixed by those writings, so sedulously preserved, it must, of course, in these days appear to differ materially from the current language of the country, which must have altered considerably by the mere lapse of time, independent of the political revolutions the country has suffered, and the consequent influx of foreign terms. I am also convinced that the obscurity of the *Sanskrit* arises as much from the abstract nature of the subjects usually treated of, and the abundance of metaphysical terms with which the writings are filled, (many of them probably coined or compounded for the occasion,) as from the causes just mentioned. My opinion, however, of the similarity is founded on comparison.

5th. "Is the religion taught in the four *Vedas* different from that of the popular superstitions, and if so, which is the more ancient?"

6th. "If the popular superstitions be prior to the writing of these books, do they give their sanction to them? Or do the learned despise the popular superstitions, at the same time that they conform to them, as the *Grecian* philosophers did with respect to the popular religion of their times?"

I have found no reason to think that the popular superstitions differ much from those exhibited in the commentaries on the *Vêds*. It is impossible that they can be more extravagantly absurd. There is a wonderful mixture of refined sense and gross nonsense in their most celebrated religious treatises. The same philosophers who have evidently discovered and maintained the subtle doctrine advanced by the bishop of Cloyne,* respecting the existence of qualities as sensations of the mind, independent of a material *substratum*, appear to believe, and to be enamoured with, the tale of churning the ocean, by means of a serpent coiled round a mountain, in order to procure immortal butter.† But my very ingenious friend Mr. Wilkins (who has just published a translation from the original *Sanskrit*, of the fables we call Pilpay's)‡ says, in his preface to the *Bhagvat-Geeta*,§ that "the most learned Brahmins of the present times are Unitarians, according to the doctrine of Kreesna; but at the same time that they believe but in one God, an universal spirit, they so far comply with the prejudices of the vulgar, as

* *Berkeley*. See Vol. II. pp. 253, 254; Vol. III. pp. 82, 83.

† See *supra*, pp. 179, 180.

‡ *Heetopades*, 1787. See *supra*, p. 139, Note †.

§ "Or the Dialogues of Kreesna and Arjoon, translated from the *Sanskreet* by Charles Wilkins, with Notes." 4to. 1785.

outwardly to perform all the ceremonies inculcated by the *Véds*, such as sacrifices, ablutions, &c.”

You will have the goodness to receive these answers from me with grains of allowance. My acquaintance with the *Hindoos*, and their language, is very superficial, and I cannot say how far, upon further progress, I may be led to alter my opinions. I doubt if I have conveyed to you one word of new information, but I am happy to shew, even by the attempt, my desire to oblige you.

I am, dear Sir, your most obedient Servant.

No. V.

A PROPOSAL FOR CORRECTING THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.*

As the attention that has been given to the Scriptures, especially of late years, has discovered many errors and imperfections in the present English translation of both the *Old* and *New Testaments*, and it does not appear that any steps are taken by authority to correct it, or to make a new one, it cannot but be a desirable object to all the friends of revealed religion, to procure, without farther delay, the best translation that can be made. And perhaps no better method can be taken to succeed in a work of this kind, than by engaging the assistance of the learned friends of free inquiry, and requesting them to transmit to this work, whatever corrections of the present version of the Scriptures may have occurred to them; that other learned men may have an opportunity of seeing and considering them. We shall therefore reserve a part of this work for this purpose; and we hope that every future Number of it, for some years to come, will contain some useful materials for it.

Most persons, we doubt not, will agree with us in thinking it more adviseable to correct the present translation, than to make an entirely *new one*; and whenever it shall appear that a sufficient number of corrections are procured, a new edition will be published. But, as it will be an easier task to correct the translation of the *New Testament*, than that of the *Old*, it will probably be accomplished some time before the other.

It is not expected that our correspondents should confine themselves to such improvements as have occurred to themselves. We shall be thankful to any person who shall take the trouble to collect from other versions, and other works, whatever of this kind they shall find to be useful.

We would also take this opportunity of observing, that though one object of this work is to procure *original Illustrations of the Scriptures*, we shall think ourselves obliged to any persons who shall transmit to us any observations, of real value, from *foreign publications*, and even though they should not confine themselves to works of recent date; because to our English readers, they will give as much satisfaction as communications that are properly original.

* *Theol. Repos.* 1784, IV. pp. 187, 188. See *supra*, p. 135.

No. VI.

A PLAN TO PROCURE A CONTINUALLY IMPROVING TRANSLATION OF THE SCRIPTURES.

(See *supra*, p. 135.)

I. LET three persons, of similar principles and views, procure the assistance of a number of their learned friends, and let each of them undertake the translation of a portion of the whole Bible, engaging to produce it in the space of a year.

II. Let each of the translations be carefully perused by some other person than the translator himself; and especially let each of the three principals peruse the whole, and communicate their remarks to the translators.

III. Let the three principals have the power of making what alterations they please. But if the proper translator prefer his own version, let the three principals, when they print the work, insert his version in the notes, or margin, distinguished by his signature.

IV. If any one of the three differ in opinion from the other two, let his version be also annexed with his signature.

V. Let the whole be printed in one volume, without any *Notes*, except as few as possible, relating to the version, or the phraseology.

VI. Let the translators, and especially the three principals, give constant attention to all other new translations of the Scriptures, and all other sources of information, that they may avail themselves of them in all subsequent editions, so that this version may always be in a state of improvement.

VII. Let the three principals agree upon certain *Rules of Translating*, to be observed by all the rest.

VIII. On the death of any of the three principals, let the survivors make choice of another to supply his place.

IX. Let all the profits of the publication be disposed of by the three principals to some Public Institution in England, or any other part of the world; or in any other manner that they shall think most subservient to the cause of truth.

Rules of Translating.

I. LET the translators insert in the text whatever they think it most probable that the authors really wrote, if it has the authority of any ancient version or MS.; but if it differ from the present *Hebrew* or *Greek* copies, let the version of the present copies be inserted in the margin.

II. If the translators give the preference to any emendation of the text not authorized by any MS. or ancient version, let such conjectural emendation be inserted in the margin only.

III. Let the additions in the *Samaritan* copy of the *Pentateuch* be inserted in the text, but distinguished from the rest.

IV. Let not the present *English* version be changed, except for the sake of some improvement.

V. In the *Old Testament* let the word *Jehovah* be rendered by *Jehovah*, and also the word *Kurios* in the *New*, in passages in which there is an allusion to the *Old*, or where it may be proper to distinguish *God* from *Christ*.

VI. Let the present division of chapters be adhered to, with as little variation as possible, and the whole be divided into *paragraphs*, not exceeding about twenty of the present verses; but let all the present divisions of chapters and verses be noted in the margin.

VII. To each chapter let there be prefixed a summary of the contents, as in the common version.

No. VII.

THE CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. GIBBON.

(See *supra*, p. 438, Notes.)

Dr. Priestley's Card to Mr. Gibbon.

Birmingham, Dec. 11, 1782.

DR. PRIESTLEY presents his compliments to Mr. Gibbon, begs his acceptance of a copy of his *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*, and requests his particular attention to the *General Conclusion*, Part I. *

Mr. Gibbon's First Letter.

SIR,

Bentinck Street, Jan. 28, 1783.

As a mark of your *esteem*, I should have accepted with pleasure your *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. You have been careful to inform me that it is intended not as a gift, but as a *challenge*; and such a challenge you must permit me to decline. At the same time, since you glory in outstripping the zeal of the Mufti and the Lama,† it may be proper for me to declare, that I should equally refuse the defiance of those venerable Divines. Once, and once only, the just defence of my own veracity provoked me to descend into the amphitheatre;‡ but as long as you attack opinions which I have never maintained, and maintain principles which I have never denied, you may safely exult in my silence and your own victory. The difference between us (on the credibility of miracles) which you choose to suppose and wish to argue, is a trite and ancient topic of controversy; and from the opinion which you entertain of yourself, and of me, it does not appear probable that our dispute would either edify or enlighten the public.

That public will decide to whom the invidious name of *Unbeliever* more justly belongs: to the historian who, without interposing his own sentiments, has delivered a simple narrative of authentic facts, or to the disputant, who proudly rejects all natural proof of the immortality of the soul, overthrows (by circumscribing) the inspiration of the Evangelists and Apostles, and condemns the religion of every Christian nation as a fable less innocent, but no less absurd, than Mahomet's journey to the third Heavens.

And now, Sir, since you assume a right to determine the objects of my past and future studies, give me leave to convey to your ear

* See Vol. V. pp. 480—494.

† See *ibid.* p. 494.

‡ In his *Vindication of Ch. xv. xvi.* against the *Examination* of H. E. Davis, who published a *Reply*. See *Monthly Review*, 1778—1780.

the almost unanimous, and not offensive, wish of the philosophic world: that you would confine your talents and industry to those sciences in which real and useful improvements *can* be made. Remember the end of your predecessor, Servetus, not of his life (the Calvins of our days are restrained from the use of the same fiery arguments) but I mean the end of his reputation. His theological writings are lost in oblivion; and if his book on the Trinity be still preserved, it is only because it contains the first rudiments of the discovery of the circulation of the blood.*

I am, Sir, your obedient humble Servant,
E. GIBBON.

The Answer.

SIR,

Feb. 3, 1783.

IT would have been impertinent in me, especially considering the object of my History, to have sent you a copy of it as a mark of my *esteem* or friendship. What I meant was to act the part of a fair and open adversary; and I am truly sorry that you decline the discussion I proposed; for though you are of a different opinion, I do not think that either of us could be better employed; and should the *Mufti* and the *Lama*, (whose challenge you say you would also decline,) become parties in the business, I should rejoice the more.

I do not well know what you can mean by intimating that I am a greater *unbeliever* than yourself; that I "attack opinions which you never maintained, and maintain principles which you never denied." If you mean to assert that you are a believer in Christianity, and meant to recommend it, I must say that your mode of writing has been very ill adapted to gain your purpose. If there be any certain method of discovering a man's real object, yours has been to discredit Christianity in fact, while, in words you represent yourself as a friend to it; a conduct which I scruple not to call highly unworthy and mean, an insult on the common sense of the Christian world. As a method of screening you from the notice of the law, (which is as hostile to me as it is to you,) you must know that it could avail you nothing; and though that mode of writing might be deemed ingenious and witty, in the first inventor of it, it has been too often repeated to deserve that appellation now.

According to your own rule of conduct, *this* charge ought to provoke you to descend into the amphitheatre once more, as much as the accusation of Mr. Davis. For it is a call upon you to defend not your *principles* only, but also your *honour*. For what can reflect greater dishonour upon a man, than to say one thing and mean another? You have certainly been very far from confining yourself, as you pretend, to a *simple narrative of authentic facts*, without interposing your own sentiments. I hold no opinions, obnoxious as they are, that I am not ready both to avow, in the most explicit manner, and also to defend, with any person of competent judgment and ability. Had I not considered you in this light, and also as fairly open, by the strain of your writings, to such a challenge, I should not have called upon you as I have done. The public will form its own judgment both of that, and of your silence, and finally

* See Vol. X. p. 270, Note *.

decide between you, the humble historian, and me, the proud disputant.

As to my *reputation*, for which you are very obligingly concerned, give me leave to observe, that as far as it is an object with any person, and a thing to be enjoyed by himself, it must depend upon his particular notions and feelings. Now, odd as it may appear to you, the esteem of a very few rational Christian friends, (though I know that it will ensure me the detestation of the greater part of the nominally Christian world that may happen to hear of me,) gives me more real satisfaction than the applause of what you call the philosophic world. I admire *Servetus*, (by whose example you wish me to take warning,) more for his courage in dying for the cause of important truth, than I should have done, if, besides the certain discovery of the circulation of the blood, he had made any other, the most celebrated discovery in philosophy.

However, I do not see what my philosophical friends, (of whom I have many, and whom I think I value as I ought,) have to do with my metaphysical or theological writings. They may, if they please, consider them as my particular whims or amusement, and accordingly neglect them. They have, in fact, interfered very little with my application to philosophy, since I have had the means of doing it. I was never more busy, or more successfully so, in my philosophical pursuits, than during the time that I have been employed about the *History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. I am at this very time *totus in illis*, as my friends know, and as the public will know in due time, which with me is never long; and if you had thought proper to enter into the discussion I proposed, it would not have made me neglect my laboratory, or omit a single experiment that I should otherwise have made.

I am, Sir, your very humble Servant,
J. PRIESTLEY.

Mr. Gibbon's Second Letter.

SIR,

Feb. 6, 1783.

As I do not presume to judge of the sentiments and intentions of another, I shall not inquire how far you are disposed to suffer, or to inflict, martyrdom. It only becomes me to say, that the style and temper of your last letter has satisfied me of the propriety of declining all farther correspondence, whether public or private, with such an adversary.

I am, Sir, your humble Servant,
E. GIBBON.

The Answer.

SIR,

Feb. 10, 1783.

I neither requested, nor wished, to have any private correspondence with you. All that my MS. card required was, a simple acknowledgment of the receipt of the copy of my work. You chose, however, to give me a specimen of your temper and feelings, and also what I thought to be an opening to a farther call upon you for a justification of yourself in public. Of this I was willing to take advantage, and at the same time to satisfy you that my philosophical pursuits, for which, whether in earnest or not, you were

pleased, to express some concern, would not be interrupted in consequence of it. As this correspondence, from the origin and nature of it, cannot be deemed confidential, I may (especially if I resume my observations on your conduct as an historian) give the public an opportunity of judging of the propriety of my answer to your first extraordinary letter, and also to this last truly enigmatical one; to interpret which, requires much more sagacity, than to discover your real intentions with respect to Christianity, though you might think you had carefully concealed them from all human inspection.

Wishing to hear from you just as little as you please in private, and just as much as you please in public,

I am, Sir, your humble Servant,

J. PRIESTLEY.

Mr. Gibbon's Third Letter.

Feb. 22, 1783.

IF Dr. Priestley consults his friends, he will probably learn, that a single copy of a paper, addressed under a seal, to a single person, and not relative to any public or official business, must always be considered as *private correspondence*, which a man of honour is not at liberty to print, without the consent of the writer. That consent, in the present instance, Mr. Gibbon thinks proper to withhold; and as he desires to escape all farther altercation, he shall not trouble Dr. Priestley, or himself, with explaining the motives of his refusal.

The Answer.

Feb. 25, 1783.

Dr. Priestley is as unwilling to be guilty of any real *impropriety* as Mr. Gibbon can wish him to be; but as the correspondence between them relates not to any *private*, but only to a *public* matter, he apprehends that it may, according to Mr. Gibbon's own distinction, at the pleasure of either of the parties, be laid before the public, who, in fact, are interested to know, at least, the result of it. Dr. Priestley's conduct will always be open to animadversion, that of Mr. Gibbon or any other person. His appeal is to men of honour, and even men of the world, and he desires no favour.

Dr. Priestley has sent a single copy of the correspondence to a friend in London, with leave to shew it to any other common friend, but with prohibition to take any other copy. But between this and printing there is no difference, except in the mode and extent. In the eye of the law, and of reason, both are equally *publications*, and has Mr. Gibbon never thought himself at liberty to shew a copy of a letter to a third person?

Mr. Gibbon may easily "escape all farther altercation" by discontinuing this mutually disagreeable correspondence, and leaving Dr. Priestley to act as his own discretion, or indiscretion, may dictate; and for this himself only, and not Mr. Gibbon, is responsible.



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